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Estimate of British labor

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WE'RE READY  
FOR THAT  
2<sup>ND</sup> FRONT



FRANCE

Prop 52-



## FRONT LINES by COLONEL T.

# SICILY TO OREL

**E**XACTLY seventy-three years ago this month, Garibaldi, standing before Messina, said: "Here is where we make Italy or die."

The place and the time of year are the same today for the Allied troops who landed on Sicily on the night of July 10. But Garibaldi's alternative does not seem to exist; for while the Allies will "make Italy" by eliminating fascism from its borders, they will not die in the large sense of the word, although some, of course, are dying and will die before the objective is won. The brilliant organization of the landing operation by General Eisenhower—who deserves the sobriquet "Eisenhower-thé-Amphibious"—practically assures success.

At this writing, twenty-four hours after the landing, seven beachheads have been established, four of the ten major airdromes of the southern coast have been captured, and the town of Pachino has been taken. Our air-borne troops have gained a foothold somewhere in the interior and now our landing troops advancing from the coast are reported to have made a junction with them. By the way, it would not be surprising if our paratroops had been dropped near the central inland railroad junction north of Agrigento, in order to paralyze the interior railroad communications of the enemy and force him to use the whole length of the coastal rail lines which are open to naval bombardment and to attack from additional landing groups.

The initial phase of the operation, covered by a great air "umbrella" and a mighty "international" navy, has gone smoothly beyond all expectations. Casualties have seemingly been light in the process of landing. The first enemy counter-attacks have developed and so far have been repelled. It is difficult to say more, especially in view of the fact that these lines will reach the reader long after new, and possibly momentous, developments have occurred on the island of Sicily. In expectation of such developments, it might not be amiss to examine some of the things that were argued in this column long ago and which were borne out by the Sicilian invasion.

**F**IRST of all, we do have ships for the opening of a second front. *Two thousand ships* hovered off Sicily on Sunday. We needed more ships to ferry troops from England and the United States to Africa and thence over 100 miles to Sicily than we would have required to ferry them

### Only the Beginning . . .

**"T**HE beginning of the end," President Roosevelt called the invasion of Sicily. Those are heartening words. But they are meaningful only if we understand that Sicily is only the beginning, and if we press with utmost speed toward the end—the establishment of Allied military power on the European continent where, together with Soviet pressure from the East, it can crush the monster of Hitlerism. The main thing now, as Colonel T. points out, is the opening of the second front.

The President's statement makes clear that the invasion of the continent is not necessarily limited to "the soft underbelly of Europe." "Once there [in Sicily]," he said, "we have the opportunity of going in different directions, and I want to tell General Giraud that we haven't forgotten that France is one of the directions." The question remains whether we will move in time. July and August are the most favorable months. Two hundred and eleven Nazi divisions—the bulk of the German army—are pinned down on the Soviet front whose center is already ablaze. The inner front of Europe's conquered nations smolders, ready to burst into flame at the first breath of invasion. Shall we let the moment pass? Or shall we leap from the splendid beginning of Sicily to the great historical imperative: the second front, full-grown, all-powerful, decisive?

Unfortunately, even at this late hour the answers to these questions are not entirely clear. It is not yet fully understood that, as Max Werner emphasizes in his new book, *Attack Can Win in '43*, the alternative before us is victory this year or a protracted seven years' war. The attempt to win the easy way, through air-power alone, is really the hard way, and all evidence shows, the impossible way. To use only one of our weapons while Hitler uses all of his is to prolong the war and to make certain that its eventual cost in blood and treasure, in the sacrifices and dislocations at home will be incalculably greater.

Military strategy is the province of our Commander-in-Chief and his generals. But the effective and timely execution of correct strategy requires the power of public opinion, requires a home front that nourishes and strengthens military action. All of us have a job to do. Against the machinations of defeatists and fainthearts the people must set their will and drive through to victory in 1943.

across the Channel. We also see that barges can do it and, what's more, *have* done it in Sicily (see our article "Barges Can Do It," in *NEW MASSES* of June 2, 1942). And—a corollary to this—it seems that working port installations on the landing side of an invasion operation are not necessary because modern barges can land heavy equipment right on the beaches (*vide* radio photographs in the press last Sunday).

Concerning the Sicilian operation, I quote Samuel Grafton, who defined the situation thus in his Sunday broadcast over the Mutual Network: "The important thing about the Sicilian invasion is not Sicily, but the demonstration of the possibility of the invasion of the Fortress of Europe." (I quote from memory.) Thus we can say that the conquest of Sicily will be all to the good. If it is a prerequisite to an invasion and conquest of Italy it will be fine; but it will be really important for a speedy victory only if its experience and means are used this summer for an invasion where it will really hurt Germany, i.e. somewhere between the mouth of the Schelde and the mouth of the Seine.

So far there is no second front. Not a single German trooper will leave the Kursk front to speed to Italy. The Germans have plainly stated that "The defense of Italy is in Italian hands." It is even said that an Italian general with the musical name of Boccherini is in command in Sicily. The Germans now think of the Brenner, of the plain of the Languedoc and the valley of the Vardar. Anything south of that to them is "expendable."

On Monday, July 5, the Germans, undeterred by the Allied war of nerves, started a grand scale offensive against the Kursk salient as a primary objective. There is no doubt that they knew then that the invasion of Sicily was coming.

They concentrated fifteen panzer divisions, one motorized division, and fourteen infantry divisions on two comparatively narrow sectors of the Orel-Kursk-Belgorod front and struck south from Orel toward Kursk, and north from Belgorod, also toward Kursk. They made holding attacks on the western side of the salient in the Sevs, Dmitriev, and Lgov sectors. Had they achieved a breakthrough in the initial phase of the double attack, their panzer spearheads would have split in two. One pincer would have closed in on Kursk to encircle and annihilate the Soviet troops west of the Orel-Belgorod line. The other would have struck toward the key-railroad

junction and base at Kastornoye and hence toward Voronezh in an attempt to repeat the maneuver which failed last summer: a breakthrough across the Upper Don and a march northward to take Moscow in the rear and ferret out the strategic reserves of the Red Army supposedly concentrated in the Tambov-Ryazan-Gorki area.

The Germans had a number of advantages for this operation. First, the Soviet Kursk bulge had no "mate." It stuck out alone. The Germans, on the other hand, had twin bulges on both sides—the Orel bulge and the Belgorod. Second, the Germans had such major primary and secondary railroad centers in those bulges as Bryansk and Orel, Kharkov and Belgorod. The Germans had seven railroad lines running to the Kursk bulge, of which four are double-track, while the Red Army had only the single-track line of Voronezh-Kastornoye-Kursk with the secondary rockade line running from Marmyshi to Verkhovye. In fact Kursk could be reached from the interior only over the single-track section of Marmyshi-Kursk, and that is all.

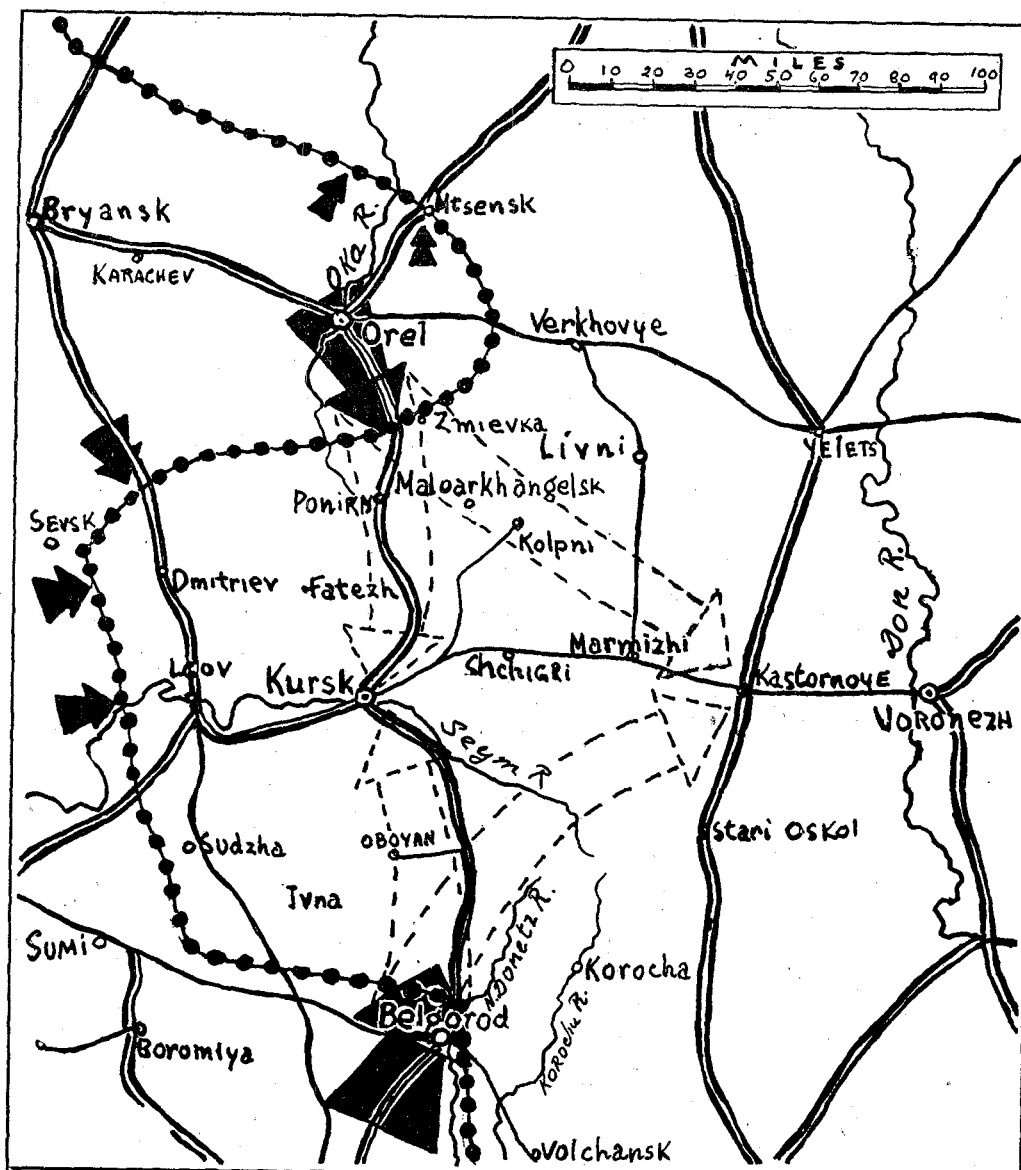
In seven days of fighting (this is being written on July 11) it is clear that:

(1) The Germans, according to the last reports, have failed to gain much more than the narrow wedge-like penetrations achieved in the Belgorod sector during the first two days (Monday and Tuesday). So far they have failed to announce any place-names in their communiques. This means that they have not reached the district center of Oboyan, forty miles north of Belgorod, or the district center of Korocha, thirty miles northeast. On the other sectors their advances have been held to practically zero. Nor do the German communiques reflect any elation at the results.

(2) Whatever the outcome of the Battle of Kursk, an outcome which is not yet assured, it may be said at this writing that the Germans have failed in their primary aim of encircling and annihilating the Soviet armies which were stationed in the bulge, because they have failed to break through during the first two or three days.

(3) For the first time in this war the German super-concentration of armor (fifteen panzer divisions in the first "strategic echelon") has failed completely to crack their opponent's line, and had to go into a fierce slugging match right from the start. Such slugging matches invariably developed in 1941 and 1942, but only after a deep penetration into the strategic depth of the Soviets. This year the Germans had to take it right on the "front lawn" of the Soviet positions.

(4) The Germans in seven days have paid with 50,000 dead and the equivalent of six full panzer divisions in tanks destroyed, as well as with more than 1,000 planes downed—and for results which are really nothing to write home about. The



Scene of the battle on the Eastern Front

first phase of the Nazis' grand offensive is definitely a fizzle—although it should not be forgotten that there are 211 German divisions on the Eastern Front and Field-Marshal von Kluge can easily get another score of divisions in reinforcements either from the interior or from other sectors of the front. Let us remember that Sicily is not draining a single German soldier or plane from the Eastern Front.

New fighting seems to be developing north of Orel, in the region of Mtsensk. This may be a Nazi preventive attack to protect their Orel salient; it may be a Soviet attack to divert German troops from the main sector. Or it may be a new German thrust along the Moscow operational direction, although that is the least probable of the suppositions. While it does appear that the initial powerful thrust of the Nazis has bogged down, one should not infer from this that the German High Command will take this failure lying down. They surely have additional tricks in their bag, with over 200 divisions to play with.

(5) The German action in the Kursk sector has again knocked most of the local

"experts" into a cocked hat. These gentlemen had been saying for the last few weeks that Hitler was too scared of the Allies in the West to dare attack in the East. There were even knavish inferences that "peace negotiations were going on between Russia and Germany." We were told that "fifty German divisions had been transferred from East to West," that half of the Luftwaffe "had left the Eastern Front," etc. Well, all this has been disposed of by events.

OUR offensive in the Pacific is making steady progress. The Japanese base at Munda has been virtually cut off from the outside world. The Japanese Navy has received a stinging blow in Kula Bay. After that it got another (aerial) wallop near Kolombangara. It seems that on the sea and in the air at least the Japanese cannot stand up to us very well.

The over-all picture in the world conflict has taken on a definitely rosier hue. The thing now is to open a real second front in Europe and to give all possible aid to China. It sounds trite, but it is the crux of the problem. And it can be done.

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## WATCH ON THE POTOMAC by BRUCE MINTON

# WHAT TO DO ABOUT FOOD

Washington.

**T**HE most critical issue on the home front, rapidly replacing the problem of industrial production as the nation's number one domestic problem, is the imminent danger of a serious food crisis. America has been backward in mobilizing its agricultural resources. Now we are menaced by very real shortages in the coming year, which threaten to become even more severe in the years to follow.

For the most part, Americans think of agriculture, if they think of it at all, as the farmers' headache, and as, at best, only remotely the concern of those who live in the great cities or the industrial centers. We are inclined to take for granted that the farms will yield too much rather than too little; we have been so conditioned to the burning of crops and to the ploughing under of every third row that shortages seem improbable.

The fact is, we face drastic curtailment of our food supply, amounting to deprivation, unless corrective steps are taken without delay.

**I**N THE first place, consider the need. At home intensive industrial production has swelled the food requirements of war workers. The armed services, of course, must be provided with all the food they can possibly require. We must supply our armies across the seas, wherever they may be located. We must feed our allies, in particular Great Britain and the Soviet Union, because their armed forces and their productive energies are essential to our victory.

But already the strain has begun to tell. Seemingly huge reserves of wheat and corn and other foods that only a year ago appeared inexhaustible, have begun to dwindle. Not so long ago we burned wheat. This year, the United States is buying wheat in Canada.

Nor are we, even now, fully able to meet the food demands of our allies. Reports from the Soviet Union tell of dangerously limited rations. The Soviet Union has expressed this growing shortage by expending the most valuable currency of war to meet the emergency—ships leaving here for the USSR carry more and more foodstuffs in proportion to munitions. Shipping space is not sacrificed lightly. We know that Soviet children, so carefully guarded and cared for by the socialist state, feel the pinch of diets below nutrition levels. We know that factory workers go undernour-

ished, and that even the Red Army has reduced its rations.

Yet present demands on us are relatively small in comparison with the requirements of the future. We and our allies will invade the European continent. We will liberate the 165,000,000 people in the occupied countries. This staggering figure does not include the 130,000,000 of Germany and Italy. It takes no account of the British and Soviet people (or, for that matter, the 70,000,000 Soviet citizens in the Russian areas now occupied by the Axis), though both our allies are incapable of raising sufficient food to meet their own needs.

As the Axis hordes withdraw from occupied Europe, what will they leave behind? What did they leave behind in the territory recaptured by the Red Army in the winter campaign? In other words, what proportion of the total needs of Europe must be supplied by the United Nations? And all this discussion omits the desperate shortages that exist in China and the Orient.

The task is gigantic. Obviously the United States alone cannot meet the food requirements of most of the world. Obviously, every effort must be made to bring other areas into the fullest production—North Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, and above all, South America.

There are those who resist any plan to swell agricultural production outside the United States. They say that South America, for example, raises the same crops as we do at home, and that in the future our neighbors will compete with us for the markets of the world. That may well occur. But the argument has nothing to do with the needs of war. It is considered banal these days to repeat: "Food is a war weapon, as much so as guns or ships or planes or tanks." But no matter how banal, the statement is deeply true. It is up to the United States to give every possible encouragement to agricultural production wherever crops can be grown. This will cost money—expansion must be financed in other countries with loans, seed, fertilizer, machinery. But would we hesitate to buy tanks and guns and ships without which we could not win victory? Are dreams of postwar monopolies sufficient reason for us to risk defeat—which would mean that markets would be the exclusive preserve of our Axis masters?

We need every agricultural resource at

our command. South America is not a military front, but it is a major front in the war for production. We dare not weaken our fight by refusing to make the most of every resource at our disposal. The recent international food conference laid the foundation for a policy of expanding agricultural production wherever possible. Unfortunately, every effort is being made by selfish groups (expressed particularly by the farm bloc) to prevent the food conference executive from acting.

**Y**ET, no matter how vigorously we encourage food production in South America and elsewhere, the urgency remains to expand our own agricultural plant and convert it to war. We have made great headway in food production since 1935-39; we have increased our yield by over 30 percent. But we are still far below the goals imposed by global war. The task is admittedly complex in detail. But in its main outlines, it is comparatively simple to see what general principles can be followed. Clearly, it is only common sense to concentrate our energies on raising crops essential to the war: that is, to convert agriculture from the production of crops of doubtful value to the production of commodities of acknowledged importance to the war effort. In addition, surely we must expand our agricultural resources by intensifying the yield on land already in use as well as by bringing new areas into cultivation.

Central to the whole program of expansion and conversion is the ability to control agriculture. The members of the farm bloc, congressional spokesmen of the monopoly landholders and banker-farmers, balk at just this point. The main fire of this willful bloc and of the reactionaries throughout the country is concentrated against subsidies. It must be remembered that subsidies are only a means to an end—or rather, to two different ends: on the one hand, on the production level, subsidies serve as incentives for the expansion and intensification of farming; on the other hand, on the consumer level, subsidies enable the administration to stabilize the cost of living, and even to roll back (reduce) consumer prices. Through subsidies, the federal government can exercise control over food production and distribution. But the idea of control horrifies those now resisting subsidies with such frenzy.

Let us first examine how subsidies influence production. Subsidies can be granted

as incentive payments to encourage farmers to plant, let us say, peanuts and soy beans instead of continuing to cultivate unwanted crops, such as short-staple cotton and tobacco of which we have too much. Subsidies can be paid to facilitate the planting of new crops, or to bring new acreage into cultivation, or for any one of a number of reasons, all looking toward an increased yield of essential products. Naturally subsidies are most needed by the small farmers.

Control can also be exercised by regulating the crop price paid to the farmer. The result of granting more favorable prices to producers of essential crops, while reducing prices on inessential commodities is to accelerate conversion. The large cotton producers, in particular, resist such control, since one of the main purposes of conversion is to eliminate excess short-staple cotton in favor of more needed crops. The kings of cotton, main strength of the present congressional farm bloc, have managed through legislation to keep cotton prices artificially high, with the result that in the last year, production of short-staple cotton increased. Yet the nation was in urgent need of food stuffs that could have been raised on cotton lands with the labor and machines wasted on this non-strategic crop.

**I**F PRICE incentives are paid to encourage agricultural conversion and intensification, the cost of these incentives must somehow be absorbed. Merely to increase the price paid the farmer for his crops and to let things go at that, means that price increases will be passed on to the consumers. Such increases to consumers would negate the program of stabilizing the cost of living—the program which sets out to prevent prices on food and other commodities from exceeding rigid ceilings. Subsidies alone can assure stabilization—that is, the government must absorb the cost of increased payments to the farmers, in order to prevent consumer prices from rising, and in order to assure the processors, wholesalers, and retailers that they will receive an equitable profit (otherwise the entire processing and distributing apparatus would be thrown out of gear and be in danger of stalling).

Let us see how subsidies work. For example: a subsidy of 5 cents a pound is paid the processor to allow him to buy the farmer's product at 40 cents a pound. Before the subsidy, the processor paid only 35 cents a pound for the product. With the subsidy, the processor buys at 40 cents while still selling to the wholesaler at 35 cents a pound plus his legitimate profit. The government has recompensed the processor for the extra 5 cents he has paid out to the farmer. In other words, the increased payment to the farmer, which serves as an incentive, would not affect the price to the consumers.

Or to take another example: if the farmer receives an incentive payment directly from the government, or if the unsubsidized price to the farmer is sufficient to assure the intensive production of essential commodities, then the payment of a 5-cent subsidy to the processor will enable him to reduce his price to the wholesaler. Formerly the processor charged the wholesaler 40 cents a pound; after receiving the 5-cent subsidy, he charges 35 cents a pound. To continue the example, the wholesaler is entitled to a profit—let us say 10 percent. But instead of charging the retailer 40 cents plus 4 cents profit (the price before the 5-cent subsidy), the wholesaler now charges 35 cents plus 3½ cents profit. The retailer in turn is entitled to a 10 percent mark-up. He charges the consumer 38½ cents plus 10 percent profit, or a maximum of 42½ cents, instead of a pre-subsidy maximum of 44 cents plus 10 percent profit of 48½ cents. The 5-cent subsidy has saved the consumer 6 cents; the subsidy has also rolled back the price to the consumers—which would have been impossible without it.

Subsidies paid on the consuming level control the prices to the public; when paid on the production level, they control the volume and type of crop. The opponents of subsidies have no interest in expanding production, in helping the small farmers, or for that matter, in preventing inflation. They prefer to allow crop prices to rise, with the rise determined by the haphazard actions of uncontrolled "supply and demand." That is not quite an accurate statement—the rise is haphazard only

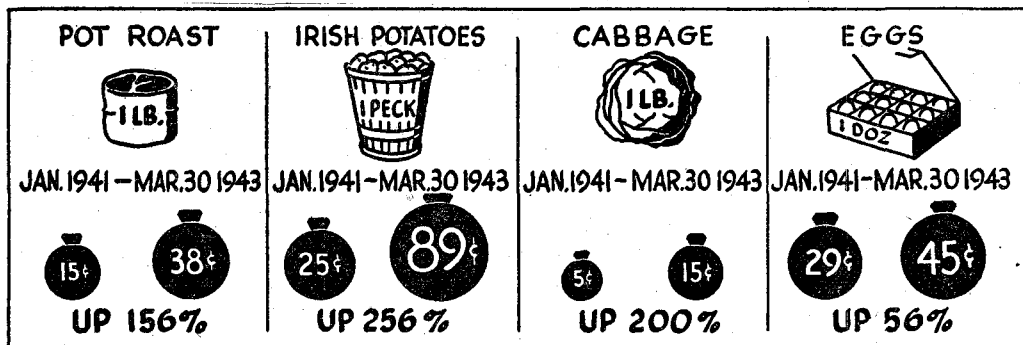
in the sense that conversion is discouraged and no help is given the small producers; but the opponents of subsidies and controls insist on legislation keeping prices artificially high on unwanted crops. The opponents of subsidies want the government to abandon the small farmers at a time when the output of these little producers is of utmost importance to the war; by squeezing out the small farmers, they anticipate a strengthened monopoly for themselves. They would pass on all increases in farm prices directly to the consumers, raising the cost of living and encouraging inflation.

**T**HE arguments against subsidies advanced by these special pleaders who put profits ahead of the needs of the nation at war are often instructive. It is not possible here to discuss all the fantastic "reasons" advanced against subsidies. Every objection, however, expresses a resistance to control. The most frequently heard "argument" is that subsidies cost too much—subsidies increase government expenditures, and that in itself is "inflationary."

Actually the cost of subsidies is so small a part of the total war budget that to call it "inflationary" is so much hokum. But for the sake of argument, let us grant that the cost in new taxation will be as great as the total cost of subsidies. The fact remains that subsidies permit a control of prices which will assure consumers of their share of essential foods. Without subsidies, such control is out of the question: prices would rise and once they start spiraling, inflation is increasingly difficult to halt; again, without subsidies, the government cannot hope to force the vitally important agricultural conversion and expansion.

The objectors to subsidies also argue that the British experience with them lacks relevance, because Great Britain imports food while we in this country produce our own. If we follow the British pattern of granting subsidies, so runs the argument, we will come to grief, since our problem is basically different. It is true, of course, that the British have an easier task. They can exercise controls for the most part at one place—at the point of entry of agricultural products, at the docks. The British government buys food abroad, and sells it to the people at a fixed ceiling, even though this means a loss to the government—that is, they grant subsidies to maintain fixed ceiling prices to the consumers. In this country we cannot control distribution so easily; our problem is admittedly far more complex.

However, the British precedent teaches us that subsidies can stabilize living costs. That is the important point. It does not matter where the food originates. Our problem is to evolve different forms of control—but like the British to achieve control of distribution (to which we must add control of production).



From the AFL Labor's Monthly Survey

Price increases in a typical war town. From a study made by Teamsters Local 92 in Canton, O.

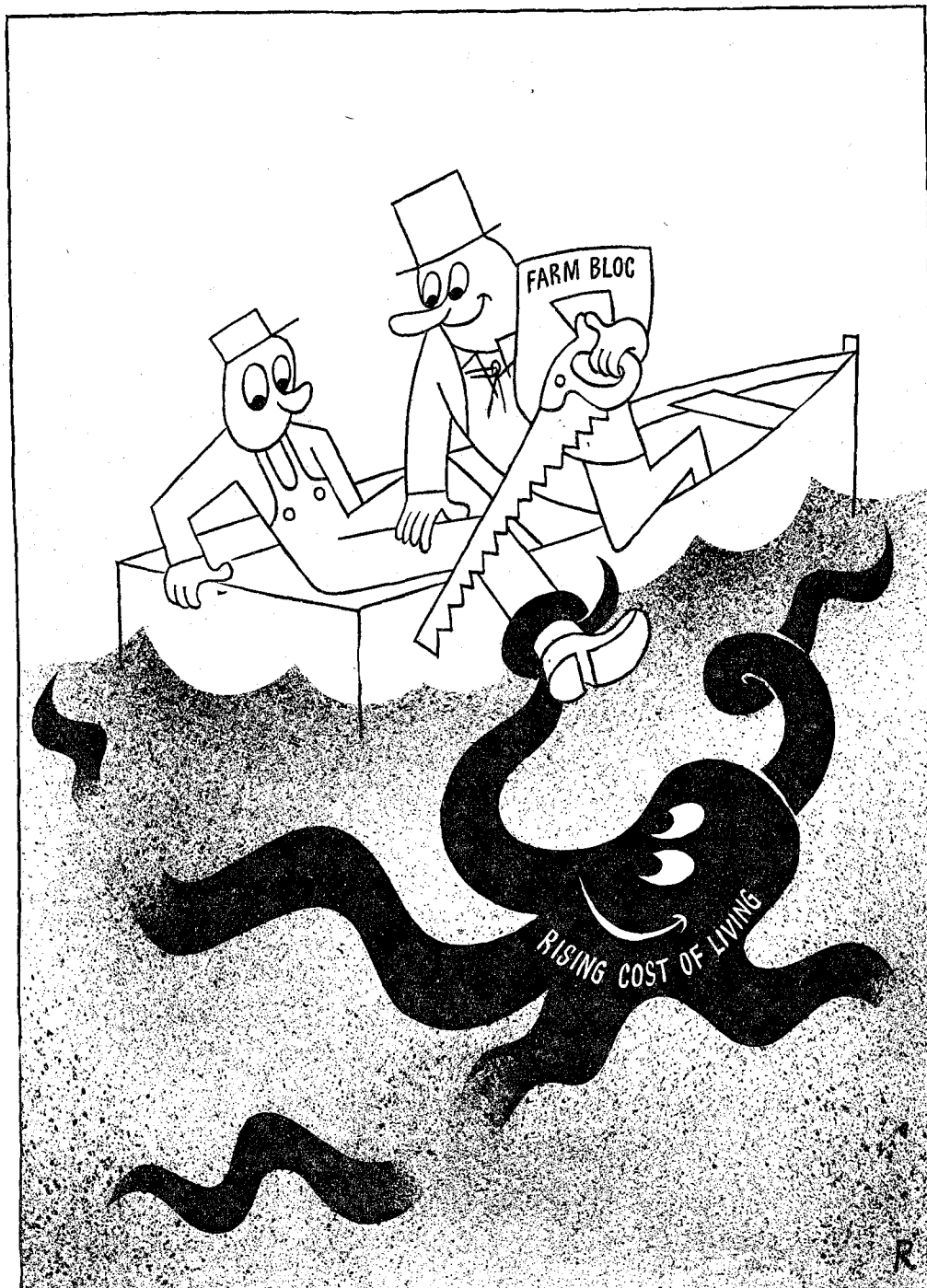


AT THIS date it would be ludicrous to propose that the automobile industry should revert to a system regulated only by peacetime "supply and demand"—that is, to permit each factory management to determine for itself whether to turn out peacetime products or war materiel, with the decision dictated only by the profit to be made from one type of production or the other. Yet the opponents of subsidies insist that agriculture be free of the controls now obtaining in industry. The continued production of short-staple cotton and tobacco is no different from allowing the automobile industry to manufacture as many roadsters and station-wagons as management chooses. The present procedure in agriculture is fully as wasteful and just as menacing to the war effort.

Subsidies can be used to eliminate other dislocations. Take the case of meat. Livestock is plentiful on the hoof. Yet housewives find it difficult to purchase meat. Packers withhold meat in the hope that price control will collapse, and that by hoarding supplies they can reap higher prices and greater profits in the near future. This attitude prevents the normal slaughter of cattle for the market—and is to be condemned. But the blame rests primarily with Congress, which has refused to endorse the principle of price control and roll-backs, has attacked OPA, has declined to appropriate sufficient funds to enforce ceiling prices, and has generally spread the belief that price control and rationing are doomed. Congress encourages the packers and herd-owners to gamble on the expectation of OPA failure. Moreover, until Congress responds to the needs of the war, the government should step in to guarantee packers and herd-owners that in the event of higher prices, all sellers will be reimbursed to the extent of subsequent rises in price. There would then be small reason to withhold meat from the market. But such guarantees rest on the principle of subsidy payments in the event of a rise in the market. The enemies of price control are also the enemies of subsidy payments—the result is needless shortages which undermine the morale of the nation.

THE appeasers are well aware of the maturing crisis in food. They gloat over shortages (which they aggravate), they exploit every dislocation, they blame all difficulties on lend-lease and "bureaucracy." They bemoan "excessive" shipments of food to our allies while America "starves." They attribute beef shortages to over-generous exports. As a matter of fact, we export no beef, but *import* it whenever possible.

No doubt we shall be forced to tighten our belts somewhat as the war develops. Therefore, we dare not neglect any action to step up production. The appeasers hope for food shortages which they anticipate using as a political weapon



against the President's win-the-war policies, as an argument against lend-lease, as a means to spread defeatism and war-weariness.

It is no accident that Herbert Hoover opposes all controls of agriculture, and is particularly violent in his denunciations of subsidies. Mr. Hoover advocates centralization of food authority under the War Food Administration, which he says should be given complete jurisdiction over production, rationing, and price-control. The first accomplishment of this approach would be to kill off OPA. Moreover, the magic formula of centralization is meaningless if it is not based on correct policy. Mr. Hoover would substitute form for content, thereby killing the content altogether. It is revealing to note the sudden waning of enthusiasm for centralization on the part of Mr. Hoover's

friends just at the moment when Chester Davis resigned as WFA administrator. The Hoover "plan" counted on Davis being in the saddle—what could be nicer, since Davis consistently sabotaged the President's entire stabilization program?

The crisis in food cannot be solved by slick formulas that seek to prevent realistic controls and to substitute resounding phrases in defense of the chaotic status quo. Nor can the food problem, central to the successful prosecution of the war, be considered the concern only of the farmers, any more than the production of armaments is of importance only to those working in industry. We have a war to win. Food is as essential to victory as guns; in the postwar period, it becomes one of the keys to rebuilding a sane and forward-looking world.

# NM SPOTLIGHT

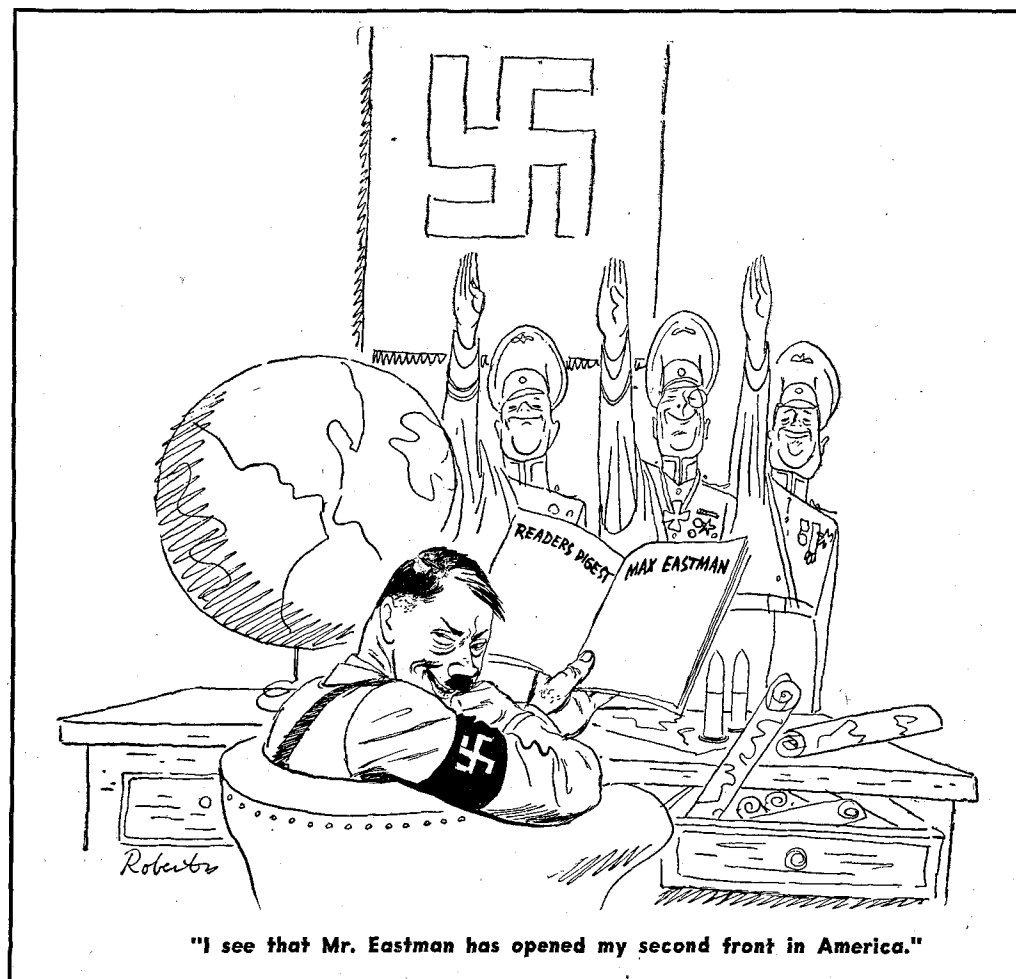
## Congress Goes Home

IT MAY well be that the most important action taken so far by the 78th Congress is the decision to recess for two months. The legislators are coming home. There they will meet the people. What they will learn between now and September can drastically affect the outlook of the majority.

The record of the present Congress has been shameful. As the legislators leave Washington, the best they can find to say for themselves is that they showed their independence of the President. The moment this boast is translated into meaningful terms, Congress has condemned itself. To flaunt a so-called independence of the Commander-in-Chief and his win-the-war policies, which the overwhelming majority of Americans accept and support, is to admit that Congress has been guilty of disruption at a time of national emergency, and that it has put politics-as-usual—and dirty politics at that—ahead of the drive for victory.

Of course, the House passed the Marcantonio anti-poll tax bill, now stalled in the Senate Judiciary Committee. At times the defeatists were made to give ground. But in all truth the obstructionists had pretty much their own way. They blocked the anti-inflation program and dangerously encouraged economic chaos. They approved a tax bill that means a bonanza for the rich. They wrecked the food program, menacing the nation with future shortages. They sabotaged the war agencies. They baited labor, they baited our allies, they baited the President. They smiled on Martin Dies, they tolerated anti-Semitic, anti-Negro speeches, so welcome to every fascist outfit in the country, they indulged in disgusting witch-hunts, they perpetuated the Goebbels lie of anti-Communism.

YET taken individually, the majority of members of the House and Senate are neither quislings nor fools. The canard that most legislators are corrupt or stupid is only another expression of the Axis attack against the democratic process. What is true, however, is that most of the legislators have been taken in by the conscious defeatists and by the gross reactionaries, *because the win-the-war forces have been unable to achieve unity, and therefore have been unable to exercise leadership.* When a coalition formed in the House behind the anti-poll tax legislation, the measure was approved. When the President began to



"I see that Mr. Eastman has opened my second front in America."

swing his fists in the last days of the session, the defeatists failed in their plans to outlaw subsidies and to scuttle the roll-back program.

The President exerted his leadership and Congress responded forthwith. But the job of making Congress pay attention to the war cannot be relegated to the President alone. The war for survival is the intimate concern of all the people. And nothing affects Congress so profoundly as the people.

The legislators are bound for home. In the two crucial months ahead the people have the obligation to tell their representatives what they think. It is not enough to drop in on them for a casual visit. It is necessary to organize community discussions throughout each member's territory, church affairs, union meetings, lodge get-togethers, mass gatherings of all kinds to thrash out the issues of the day with the legislators of the district present. Let each defend his record to his constituents; let his constituents tell each member what they think.

The temper of Congress can be changed. The opportunity is at hand to re-

educate and reinstruct each individual legislator in his obligation to the nation, to the people who will go to the polls in 1944.

## L'Affaire Hague

IT MUST have been a dull day in the office of the New York Times or the Herald Tribune—we don't know which. Some bright young man was looking through the Daily Worker and came across something that he thought was pretty hot. And so the next day New York's two most staid and conservative newspapers were decked out with front-page stories: "Reds Back Hague for His War Stand," and "Hague Praised by Communists for War Stand." Not to be outdone, every other newspaper felt it incumbent upon itself to carry its own variation on that tune. For three days running stories and editorials on this epoch-making event studded the press. Hague, Governor Edison, Joseph Curran, president of the National Maritime Union, and various other pertinent and impertinent individuals were solicited for statements. And PM, as its managing editor, John P. Lewis, sol-



emly reported, even called a meeting of its editors "to find out why we got scooped on the story that the Communists teamed up behind Hague."

All of which is an illuminating commentary on the political and moral level of the American press in the thick of the greatest war in our history. Needless to say, Mayor Hague himself is not running for office, has not asked for and has not been given the endorsement of the Communist Party. What has been blown up into a non-existent alliance between Hague and the Communists was a discussion of the political situation in New Jersey in two articles by William Norman, state secretary of the Communist Party, which appeared in the *Daily Worker* of July 6 and 7. The reactionary defeatist forces in New Jersey are gathering around the Republican Party, which is grooming Walter Edge as its candidate for governor, Norman stated. The danger of a Republican victory is all the greater because the pro-war, pro-Roosevelt forces are split as a result of a factional fight in the Democratic Party between Mayor Hague and Governor Edison. That split already revealed its potentialities for harm when last year it made possible the defeat of former Senator Smathers, a Roosevelt supporter, and the election of the Chamber of Commerce man, Albert Hawkes. In this situation Governor Edison, by insisting on perpetuating the factional feud, is playing into the hands of the reactionary Republicans. As for Hague, Norman pointed out that he "supports the President and the government's win-the-war policies. This is indisputable and is a major test for today."

**N**EW MASSES fought Mayor Hague tooth and nail in the days when he sought to suppress civil liberties and establish a dictatorship of reaction in New Jersey. Hague as an individual means nothing, but what Hague represents *today*—as distinct from what he represented yesterday—is all-important. No doubt his political methods smell no sweeter than those of other machine politicians. But the war is the decisive question and Hague's position on the war ought to be the primary criterion for judging him. Just as we supported John L. Lewis when he was progressive and oppose him now that he has become the instrument of the defeatists, so we feel that every true liberal, everyone who places victory in the war above all else must today urge the unification of the Hague and Edison forces in the Democratic Party to assure the defeat of the anti-war Republicans in November. And it seems to us that for all his sins, past and present, a Mayor Hague who backs the

war is morally a giant compared to the Hoovers and Tafts who would sell out the United States for a negotiated peace with fascism.

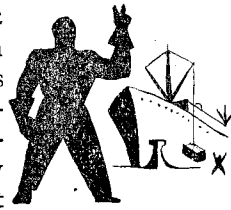
## Seamen at War

**T**HE MARITIME workers who man the bridge of ships across the sub-infested seas have earned their right to a say about the war—at their national convention in New York last week they spoke their mind. The 260 battle-hardened delegates off 167 ships deliberated, as merited honors came to them from all directions. Colonel Knox, Secretary of the Navy, summed up the encomiums with his message lauding the members of the National Maritime Union for a "record of heroism that is truly unsurpassed." The President of the country, as well as men like Wendell Willkie, welcomed the seamen similarly. (Scripps-Howard papers, please copy.)

American labor, and the nation generally, would do well to hearken to the seamen's proposals. Space does not permit the full recital of their constructive resolutions and actions; we can here only partially summarize their views. They began at the beginning: "Stop knifing our Commander-in-Chief's victory program" was the gist of an open letter they sent to Congress. Unanimously pledging "no strike," they urged maximum support of the President's program, domestic and foreign; unity at home and abroad. These men, who more than any other Americans know their neighbors, implemented their call for international unity by sponsoring steps to achieve world-wide trade union unity built around the labor movements in this country, Great Britain, Soviet Russia, and China.

They backed President Murray of the CIO to the hilt, excoriating John L. Lewis and his treasonous policies; they sought the passage of measures that would facilitate unity in the war—the passage of the Marcantonio Anti-Poll Tax bill, the unswerving fight against anti-Semitism, the achievement of the President's price-control program. They welcomed the establishment of the Office of War Mobilization, but recognized its shortcomings; the absence of labor representation and the failure to survey the country's manpower facilities in order to coordinate effectively the nation's total resources. Furthermore, they urged labor representation in the war machinery—on all government war boards "from the Cabinet on down."

**T**HE seamen who go through storm and fire to bring America's weapons to the

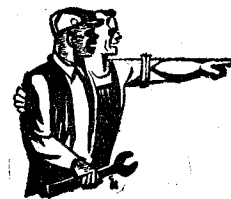


fronts may well look askance at conditions on the docks, the scene of an industry closely allied to theirs. They backed fully the CIO's Maritime Commission report and plans to raise the efficiency level of cargo handling and favored the investigations of the maritime scene by Senator Kilgore's committee. It so happened that the Atlantic Coast District of the International Longshoremen's Association met simultaneously with the NMU: more glaring differences on the labor front are hard to find. Where the seamen exercised the utmost democracy and patriotism, the hand-picked delegates to the ILA elected Joseph Ryan president-for-life of the Atlantic Coast District. Ryan coupled his ascendancy to "kingdom" with panegyrics for John L. Lewis, demanding that the latter be admitted immediately to the AFL. Ryan's approaches were totally contrary to those of the seamen; he refused to establish grievance machinery to forestall the wild-cat longshore strikes that are popping with disturbing frequency lately; he took no steps to remedy the archaic "shape-up" system which today is a positive menace to full mobilization of labor power especially in emergency convoy loading jobs.

It is indeed tragic that the country's longshoremen, and particularly the 30,000 in New York—the world's greatest port—had not one word to say in the choice of delegates to the convention. Indeed the rank and file scarcely knew a convention was going on, since no union meetings or union publications told them anything about it.

Thus the rank and file had no opportunity to enforce a win-the-war program upon the arrogant, Ryan-chosen delegates. Emperor Ryan himself is notorious as a weak-sister in the war effort; immediately before Pearl Harbor he supported the move for a keep-out-of-the-war conference along America First lines. That conference was scuttled by the bombs which fell on Pearl Harbor, but those bombs affected Ryan very little. And our boys at the fronts, and their allies, are the sufferers.

## Tobin vs. Tobin



**A**S PRESIDENT of the powerful Brotherhood of Teamsters, and as editor of the union's official organ, Daniel J. Tobin attacked

John L. Lewis for starting "a war against the United States." In the June issue of the *International Teamster*, through an editorial entitled "Lewis Opens His Big Mouth," Mr. Tobin blasted Lewis for spreading discontent. He warned that Lewis was sinking "venomous, serpent-like fangs amongst the workers of our

country." He asked, "Does he [Lewis] realize that he is organized labor's greatest enemy . . . that Hitler, Mussolini, and Hirohito must regard him as one of their closest friends?"

A month later, as chairman of the committee of three appointed by the executive council to pass on Lewis' application for re-affiliation with the AFL, Mr. Tobin editorialized: "I am strongly in favor of unifying the labor movement and to that end I will do all I can to bring the miners back into the Federation. . . . Such reaffiliation would be a big step forward to that all-inclusive unity of labor which all its true friends desire."

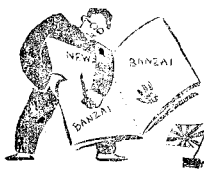
**N**O ONE can disagree with Mr. Tobin's desire for labor unity. But can unity be won by throwing the mantle of AFL approval and protection over John L. Lewis, whom Mr. Tobin denounced only a month ago for "doing the rank and file of labor more harm than all the anti-labor groups combined. His actions are close to being traitorous to his people and to the nation. In the framework of democracy, we cannot afford to have dictators, be they big or little."

Any threat to democracy certainly represents a danger to the free trade unions. It is easy enough to understand why Matthew Woll is so eager to welcome Lewis into the AFL—he and Hutcheson admittedly act as Lewis' goons within the Federation; they have fought every attempt to prosecute the war and to forge genuine labor unity.

But how explain Mr. Tobin's amazing position? Unity cannot be advanced by embracing the enemy, as Neville Chamberlain proved at Munich. Tragically, Mr. Tobin (like most of the Federation's top leadership) is still bewitched by the Hitler-inspired fantasy of anti-Communism. It is his inability to throw off the debilitating disease of Red-baiting that exposes Tobin to Lewis' sophistries about "unity," despite the teamster president's anxiety to win the anti-Axis war. Like Goebbels, John L. Lewis trades on the gullibility of those who persist in clinging to a dangerous mythology; like Goebbels, John L. Lewis exploits the lack of perception on the part of his victims to destroy them.

**T**OBIN's misinterpretation of the meaning of unity by no means assures Lewis of re-affiliation. The AFL executive council can still be dissuaded from the shortsighted policy of opening the gates of the union movement to "labor's greatest enemy." At least, Tobin in his June editorial has given a timely warning to the AFL rank and file, *forearming them in the fight against the man whose actions, Mr. Tobin told his union, "affected adversely every man and woman in the country."*

## Just a Japanese Agent—



Those of us charged with the thankless task of scrutinizing the New York Daily News will suffer little shock at the revelation that a Japanese agent has been uncovered in Captain Patterson's editorial pastures. However, those of us who, in line of duty, must read that paper will be grateful to the Department of Justice for the discovery and the indictment of Heizer Wright, a trusted employe of the eminent journalistic captain for sixteen years. We trust the FBI will continue its researches in the field of the Patterson-McCormick-Hearst-Howard Axis: you can learn a lot there.

Undoubtedly most of the gauleiters of those papers will respond as nobly as Richard W. Clarke, *News* managing editor, who said that the indicted man had not been suspended. "He's indicted," Mr. Clarke said staunchly, "but he hasn't been tried and convicted yet." Nor did he expect to "suspend" Wright. Of course not. Certainly the top personnel of the *News* cannot be too harsh with a man who has been extremely helpful to America's enemies; Wright's course of action varied little with the *News* editorial policy, past or present. He seems only to have gotten a little money on the side. Wright's work for the Pacific end of the Axis merited a bit of extra emolument: it must have taken quite a lot of time to edit the speeches and correspondence of Japanese consuls stationed along the Atlantic Coast, to do editorial work for Shiroji Yuki, Japanese consul in New York, to conduct an investigation of "Communist activities" in the United States, and to prepare reports for his other boss (not Captain Patterson, we mean) on "alleged Communists." That work merited the \$200 to \$400 a month expenses he received. The Department of Justice statement indicates that there was

no evidence "that Wright's superiors on the newspapers had any knowledge of the activities complained of in the indictment."

Be that as it may; those superiors don't seem to be straining any arteries disavowing the man. After all, if a fellow wants to pick up a little extra jack on the side, that's his constitutional right, isn't it? Captain Patterson's own Vox Pop will tell you it's That Man in the White House who wants to subvert the Bill of Rights; he's got the treasonous audacity to urge Americans into the collectivistic enterprise of winning this war and forcing the Axis to unconditional surrender. Why, that strikes right at the very heart of individual enterprise.

Suspend Heizer Wright? What for?

## Polish Crisis

**T**HE death of General Sikorski, Premier and Commander-in-Chief of the Polish government-in-exile, has created a diplomatic crisis of the first importance. As leader of a small minority of conservatives opposed to the powerful Pilsudski party, Sikorski's power rested more on British-American support than it did on the Polish elements surrounding his government. It was under Sikorski's premiership that the treaties of friendship with the Soviet Union had been signed in 1941, that good relations with that country had been established. His policies, however, were not sufficiently determined to lay the democratic base for his government which would have permitted the elimination of reactionary and fascist forces from its ranks. Sikorski did not have the strength to stand firm against the disruptive forces who, accepting Nazi propaganda at face value, provoked the split with the USSR, and, going further, even attempted to isolate the Soviet Union from her allies among the United Nations. While he himself showed a willingness to accept the consequences of victory over fascism, he could not establish a like-minded government.

Still the death of Sikorski disposes of an obstacle in the path of the ultra-reactionaries. There is now the danger that the Polish government-in-exile will fall completely under the domination of forces who represent the feudal landed aristocracy of Poland, who have consistently been enemies of the Soviet Union, who have been suspiciously close to the Goebbels' line, and who have a long record of identification and collaboration with fascist leaders throughout central Europe. The President, Raczkiewicz, a part of the Pilsudski party machine, opposed Sikorski's friendship with the Soviet Union and was prevented from resigning at that time only through the pressure that Sikorski was able to bring to bear. He is said to be a mere tool of Gen. Kazimierz Sosnkowski, former Chief of

## Coming

**T**HE exchange of letters between Max Lerner and A. B. Magil in last week's issue has stirred widespread interest in labor and progressive circles. As we go to press, letters are beginning to arrive commenting on the discussion, which concerned the implications for American unity in the dissolution of the Communist International. In next week's issue we will begin publishing these comments. We again invite our readers to participate. *NEW MASSES* also plans to publish articles dealing with issues raised in this discussion.



Staff and Minister of War under Pilsudski, open opponent of Sikorski, and chief of the Pilsudski party forces throughout the world. Current news from London carries the sinister suggestion that Raczkiewicz has selected Sosnkowski as the new Commander-in-Chief of the Polish government, a nomination which is being opposed by the remaining decent members of that gov-

ernment. Of course, there is among the Poles in exile a strong tendency toward improving relations with the Soviet Union—certain far-sighted Poles are straining toward that end. We will, in a forthcoming issue, speak of them in greater detail.

The winning of the war as well as the postwar situation demands the formation of a strong and independent Polish govern-

ment, thoroughly anti-fascist in character and determined to maintain friendly relations with Poland's allies, especially with her neighbor the Soviet Union. The British and American governments can play an important role in paving the way for such a government by refusing any longer to harbor—to say nothing of fostering—Polish fascist elements and their press.

## GUEST EDITORIAL

**by Sen. James E. Murray**



**T**HE goal of any enlightened government should be the constant improvement of the social and economic conditions under which men carry on the struggle of life.

Our country, under its free institutions, has already made much progress in this direction. We are today fighting a global war to preserve those things which have been won by centuries of struggle. Nations, like individuals, often miss psychological opportunities. The present war is a case in point. We must see to it that we do not miss the rare opportunity now present to remove forever our worst internal enemy—the fear of want.

The need for social security is universally recognized. Our awakening to this great need has been slow in coming. Other countries have enjoyed many forms of social security long before the subject was seriously considered here.

Meanwhile, our rapid industrial development, which is always in progress, has been carrying in its wake a steady growth of social problems. In a comparatively few years, as time is measured in the lifetime of a nation, we have changed from a predominantly agricultural economy to an industrial power of worldwide ramifications. We have been so completely engrossed in building bigger industrial plants, bigger

## TOWARD SOCIAL SECURITY

skyscrapers, bigger banks and monopolies, bigger golf clubs and art galleries, and so on, that we have failed to devote much time to our mounting social ills.

With the enactment of the social security legislation in 1939, a beginning was made to meet this great national need. The benefits of that measure, however, covered only meagerly a part of the population. We perhaps needed experience and a trained personnel to administer a more complete and complicated system. In the short few years of its existence, the system which we have set up has worked well. It has not only demonstrated its great value and practicability but has given its administrators ample opportunity to learn the mechanics of operation.

**T**ODAY there is no longer any doubt about the need for a broader program of social security, although there are those who attempt to question the feasibility of taking the step while the war is on. Those of us who adhere to the theory that now is the logical time to broaden the system have ample grounds for our position. Let me briefly specify:

(1) While employment is at its peak, employers and workers are better able to lay aside funds for the needs of the future.

(2) Compulsory social insurance now will drain off much of the funds which may otherwise increase the danger of inflation, and at the same time, channel these funds into the war effort.

(3) At the end of the war, demobilization will bring serious problems to the fore. Until our returning soldiers are moved into peacetime pursuits, they will have to be aided through a system of unemployment compensation and a network of employment offices to locate jobs.

(4) The enactment of this legislation now will help greatly the morale of the fighting men and industrial workers. They will know that soup kitchens and bread lines will not be their lot during the transition period, and that in the future their

families will not become objects of charity in the event they lose their jobs or die. Men fight better and work with greater enthusiasm under the influence of economic security.

(5) Considerable time is needed to accumulate funds for future payments. If we wait until the war is over, where will we get the necessary funds to provide for immediate needs? Then, too, to take on an additional 15,000,000 people under the aegis of an extended system of social security would consume considerable time.

(6) It is only fair that farm laborers, farmers, domestic workers, the self-employed, professional men, small businessmen, and others should be included in our social security system without further delay.

(7) Enlarged coverage and increased benefits and survivors' insurance will make it possible for many older workers to retire, and thus open opportunities for younger men and women.

(8) Protection of the health of our people is one of the most important provisions of our bill. The blessings of medical science should at all times be available to the rich and the poor alike. Essential medical care, now denied to many, must not be unduly postponed.

Had we prepared for the Axis challenge, the period of the war would certainly be shorter. Indeed, we might have escaped the challenge entirely. By preparing now for the conditions which peace will surely usher in, we will avoid dangerous dislocations in our social and economic life which may well challenge our democratic system.

We do not rest our case on its benign intent alone. We are convinced of its economic soundness as well. An economic order which subjects one-third of our people to periodic unemployment and destitution is faulty. It must be corrected.

This is why Sen. Robert F. Wagner and I have introduced the new Social Security Bill, and we hope that thoughtful men and women in all walks of life will endorse it.

# FIGHTING THE FRENCH FIGHTERS

*While our ally's Committee of National Liberation promotes French unity against Hitler, our State Department encourages the Vichy elements . . . Joseph Starobin bares the Department's policy.*

It is characteristic of the present moment in American policy toward France that Gen. Henri Giraud should have been invited to Washington. For the essence of the matter is that having failed to "sell" the general to the people of France, our State Department is trying to "sell" him to the people of the United States. Or, to put it differently, having failed to impose its own policies upon France, the State Department is making an elaborate justification for itself here at home. The whole thing is fantastic. It would be funny if such serious matters were not at stake.

And this can be said without in any way denigrating the heroic figure of General Giraud. For he is a co-president of the French Committee of National Liberation, unquestionably a representative personality of the best in French military tradition. It is only a bit sad to see this general hauled over to this country in the midst of what are supposed to be preparations for an invasion, in order to model for the State Department's self-advertising campaign.

These are harsh words. But it is impossible not to be angry with this whole shameful episode, since the reception for Giraud has so tastelessly and so meanly been accompanied by a bitter campaign of innuendo and defamation against de Gaulle. What a supreme contempt for democratic processes when the State Department finds it possible to entertain one president of the French Committee for National Liberation while heaping insults on the other.

The real question at hand is not an issue between de Gaulle and Giraud, and it has not been. In fact, the real issue is no longer a conflict between de Gaullists and

Giraudists in the sense of a month or two ago. The real question, and most pertinent for us Americans, is the abysmal failure of American policy to appreciate and recognize French reality. When we begin to hear that Frenchmen dislike America because of our State Department's policy, it is time for Americans to be alarmed. Not for the sake of France, but for the sake of America.

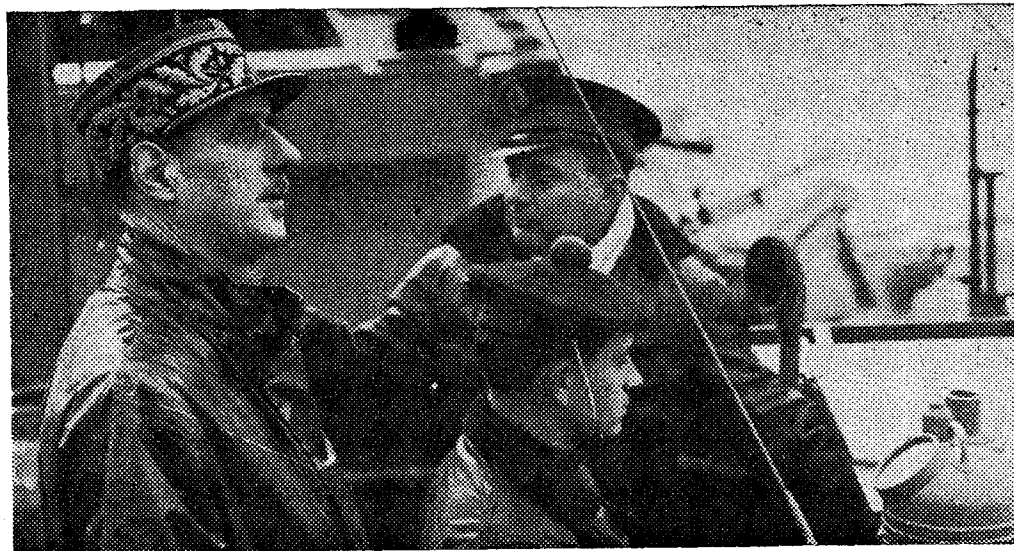
The fact is that within six weeks, the French Committee of National Liberation, born out of immense passions and in the most difficult circumstances, has made a remarkable record. Our press makes it appear that the French are born bickerers; everything in Algiers is supposed to be politics-as-usual as though there were something peculiarly French in that; the de Gaullists are painted as autocratic one day, fronts for Moscow the next; anti-American and anti-British the third day; disdainful of victory on the fourth. But the truth remains that despite great differences of personality, despite the legacy of the power of Vichy (American-supported until November) despite the grueling impact of a sudden defeat, and the tasks of welding unity outside of metropolitan France itself, a very great deal has been accomplished. President Roosevelt's comment, made after this article was written, in which he denied that the French Committee of National Liberation is a government, and in fact denied that there is a France, raises the complex question of sovereignty, which needs much more extended discussion. Certainly the people of France must be free to choose their own government after this war; but this principle ought not be applied in such a way as to harm the best of

their present leaders, men whose whole work certifies that there is a France, a France fighting with us.

THE French Committee of National Liberation has in six weeks nullified and eradicated the Vichyite legislation. The fascist groupings like those of Doriot have been banned. A number of open fifth columnists—who were entrenched in administrative posts and were sending information to Hitler every day on the movement of American troops—have been removed. Leading Vichymen—those who attempted the flying trapeze act with American connivance—have been forced to resign: Peyrouton, Nogues, Boisson. And the very fact of their *resignation* is proof of the overwhelming authority of anti-Vichy opinion in all circles of Algiers. Not only have the French Communists been allowed to function legally, publishing their own press alongside of the rest of the democratic press, but the anti-Communist laws of the Daladier regime—the republic of 1939—have been scrapped, suggestive of the vitality of the new republicanism which is coming to birth. When Giraud and Catroux will sit on the same platform with de Gaulle while a leader of the local Fighting French, recently a hunted man, relates the heroism of young Guy Moquet, son of a French Communist deputy of Paris who was murdered by Vichy, and the audience weeps—something important has happened.

Or think of what this means: Geoffrey Parsons, Jr., writing in the *New York Herald Tribune* from London on July 1 says that after the Tunisian battles 40,000 Giraudist troops tried to join de Gaulle's forces, and were prevented from doing so only by the intercession of American officials on the scene. This is equivalent to half the forces that participated in the Tunisian campaign; it is almost a fifth of all the French soldiers in North Africa. There is nothing more revealing than this episode of the trend toward unity, which transcends the older conflicts. And the fact that it was the intercession of half-pint, stupid American career officers in Algiers which prevented this unity illuminates the real problems at stake.

Of course, there are dozens of problems that remain. There are ambitious men all around the committee—how could it have been otherwise? There are problems of increasing production. There is the as-yet-hardly-tackled Moslem question. There is the question of fair play to the Jews, the reinstatement of the Cremieux law. There



General de Gaulle (right) inspects a torpedo boat of the French Navy.

is the problem of really integrating the work of this committee with the struggles of the French underground. There are Vichy-men who are still hiding, and seeking shelter in the French army—but these are all problems that can be solved once we recognize what a great advance has been made.

FOR what we have in this French Committee of National Liberation is something quite new in this war. It represents the reconstruction of France in the process of the war itself. It represents the transfer of French sovereignty which had been dragged down in the mud of Vichy. It is the first instance in which a leadership is formed for a country occupied by Hitler that is based on the strivings of the masses themselves. There is no parallel like it in another of the exiled governments: contrast the process of French reconstruction with the dismal situation in the Polish or the Yugoslav governments-in-exile and you appreciate in an instant why the rebirth of France is so crucial for the realization of a people's peace in Europe after the war.

And this is precisely what has gotten the State Department so riled. Presumably the Allies want a strong France. Yet they are afraid of strong Frenchmen. Presumably the Allies want a France that will fight. But it was in Vichy that the pacifists and *anti-bellicistes* found their refuge. Presumably the Allies want a friendly France, a real ally. But it was from Vichy that the worst anti-British and anti-American propaganda came, and is still coming. How obvious then, that to really prepare the France that we want and we need, the last vestiges of Vichy elements must be wiped out, the slate wiped clean; for it is in the elimination of the Vichymen from the upper ranks of the army and the administration of the empire that the way lies to solid unity with the mass of fighting Frenchmen in the underground, on the mainland.

Perhaps it is true that the quasi-Vichy officers fought well in the Tunisian campaign; but so did the rank-and-file soldiers. And when these soldiers wish to join firm hands with the de Gaullists of General Le Clerc, it should not be too hard for the French division of our State Department to make its choice. A hundred majors and generals who reek of Vichy or 40,000 soldiers who are breaking down the separation between de Gaulle and Giraud?

And for all this a mighty resurgence of French nationalism is essential. What lunacy to fear this nationalism and not to realize the dross which this nationalism is eradicating in the mind of France. It was Vichy which sought to destroy the old flaming nationalism of the French against the Nazis. It is de Gaulle who symbolizes and revives it; it is precisely this national hatred of the Boches which carries the

*This month it is a year since the fall of Sevastopol. Norman Rosten's poem of commemoration is from "The Fourth Decade And Other Poems," to be published by Farrar & Rinehart this autumn.*

## Sevastopol

It is a strange and silent day.  
The sun is hot upon the hills.  
Gulls wheel in the cloudless sky,  
apart from time, still beautiful.

The white cliffs of the harbor,  
moored like great ships, stand unshaken.  
Beyond, the landscape is cut with a scythe  
where war has walked with its arc of terror.

Across the bay, piled upon their own dead,  
the last charge of Marines is broken.  
They fought the tanks with bayonets  
and now the screaming air is still.

The victor crawls towards his victory,  
towards a stone land calm with corpses.  
He has finally won Sevastopol.  
The graveyard has surrendered.

These are the smashed houses and boulevards;  
the girders and trees that surrendered;  
these are the people who let him enter  
because they are finally unalive.

The smoke, echo of flame, lifts.  
The seared horizon is grown over with blue flesh.  
Sound is absent: only the sea remains,  
the most familiar, confirming the event.

The bodies on the earth are quiet  
and must learn to sleep forever;  
their fingers still gripping the soil  
where life nevertheless slipped away.

Among these streets of fire and desolation  
Lenin stands, his outstretched arms shot off;  
he points with his eyes, bronze and burning,  
towards the indestructible future.

Words on a broken wall testify *Death*  
*to the invaders! Die, you Nazis! Death!*  
And the stones are red with blood  
and no living thing remains.

This was not Paris, the open city.  
This was a closed city and men fought for it.  
They pulled the sky down over their heads.  
Honor blazed in their eyes like suns.

For eight months the body held.  
This is the last day of the eighth month.  
This is the day the heartbeat stopped.

NORMAN ROSTEN

underground forward each heroic day.

The game is fast running to its denouement. The whole of the State Department's French policy has delayed the invasion of France, but it has signally failed to hamper the rallying of the French forces of liberation. The policy toward Vichy failed; the deal with Darlan failed; the effort to set up General Giraud against the rest of France failed; the effort to isolate and break the Fighting French failed; the

hope that de Gaulle would be swamped and defeated within the French Committee of National Liberation has again failed.

And we know this to be true from the pathetic stream of nasty lies which have been flowing from inspired sources in Washington. "Easy lies to comfort cruel men," who sense in their desperation that the Humpty-Dumpty of a reactionary France cannot be put together again.

JOSEPH STAROBIN.

# AN ESTIMATE OF BRITISH LABOR

*R. Palme Dutt scrutinizes the paradox of a Labor Party Conference that declares for national unity but rejects cooperation with the foremost advocates of that unity. The central task ahead.*

London.

THE Labor Party Conference took place against a background of the present climax of the war and the impending military offensive. The problems of the war are not merely for the experts but for broad, democratic opinion that requires the mobilization of democratic forces in opposition to the mobilization of pro-fascists and isolationists. The problems of diplomatic and military strategy, of the war in the Far East and in Europe, of air bombardment and the second front, of the policy in India, of war production and the organization of domestic political alignments on social and economic questions, no less than postwar questions—all these imperatively demand a clear, united voice and leadership of the progressive forces within the common national effort.

Has this leadership been given? The outcome of the Labor Party Conference revealed the contradiction which lies at the root of the movement's present dilemmas. On the one hand, the Conference firmly and emphatically, and by an overwhelming majority, declared for the maintenance of national unity against fascism and rejected proposals to break the electoral truce—proposals which would have meant the smashing of the coalition against fascism. This was the Conference's outstanding, positive achievement. On the other hand, having on the first day declared for national unity, for cooperation with Tories and Liberals against fascism, on the third day the Conference by a less decisive majority rejected working class unity for cooperation with the Communists within that national unity. This, despite the fact that the absence of such working class unity within the national front inevitably gives the initiative and decisive role to non-labor elements and thus brings about tendencies toward left impatience and demands for breaking the electoral truce.

Similarly, the Conference made clear that the electoral truce did not mean a political truce, that is, abandonment of the most active, current political campaigning of the labor movement. But while in the abstract a position was thus laid down to the leadership for such a campaign, a spectacle of indecision was revealed—of the division of leadership or evasion of responsibility on many vital, immediate issues.

The positive aspects of the Conference must not be underestimated. The six to one majority in favor of the electoral truce corrected the confusion of last year's nar-

row majority and dealt a powerful blow against all disruptive maneuvers to break national unity. This vote considerably surprised the ill-informed press, which to the last had anticipated a close vote on the question. The campaign conducted by the Communist Party clarified the opinion of militant workers on this issue and played an important part in the decisive character of the result. The weakness of the unstable leftist splinter elements, divorced from any basis in mass membership, was also revealed.

FURTHER positive results were shown in the repudiation of a coupon election and the pledge to submit any question on governmental participation to a Conference decision. The defeat of Home Secretary Herbert Morrison as treasurer of the Labor Party represented to a certain degree a check on attempts to build up a personal dictatorship within the Party reminiscent of Ramsay MacDonald's position. The defeat was also a rebuff of tendencies recently expressed by Morrison in speeches which recalled closely the old MacDonald line and had received warm approval in big business quarters.

Important resolutions were also passed on a number of special issues such as service pay and pensions, national health service, educational reform, and support of the Beveridge Report. Even where the voting was divided, creating confusion and indecisive results, the votes showed the delegates' desire for a clear, positive policy—for example, the vote rejecting the anti-government Silverman amendment on the Beveridge Report by 1,715,000 to 955,000. Simultaneously, the votes reflected a strong desire to press the government for full adoption of the Beveridge Report and an equally definite determination not to allow this issue to be made a pretext for opposition to the government or repudiation of the Labor Ministers.

A similar instance was the iron and steel trades' adoption of the Vansittart amendment to the Stokes semi-pacifist resolution on postwar policy in relation to Germany. The vote of 1,803,000 to 720,000 did not in fact represent the adoption of the Vansittart program by the Labor Party, but reflected the definite rejection of any attempt to smuggle in pacifist tendencies under the guise of anti-Vansittartism. Here again the evasion of responsibility by the executive left delegates with no other choice and led to the final adoption of an inadequate policy statement without a trace of a working

class international outlook. The weakness lay in the leadership rather than in the spirit and outlook of the delegates.

Further, while the cause of labor unity did not win the day at this Labor Party Conference, and the seriousness of rejection in the present urgent situation is evident, the fact remains that the measure of support won, representing twenty-six percent of the Labor Party for Communist affiliation, is an important indication of the progressive forces' advance. It is also the highest vote polled for affiliation since this issue was first raised twenty-three years ago. The significance of this vote is greater because it included such unions as the Miners and the Engineers, representing with the Railwaymen the decisive forces of the organized working class.

Under ordinary conditions this undoubted advance of progressive forces within the Labor Party, even though not yet reaching a majority, could be regarded as a step forward in the inevitably slow and toilsome evolution of the movement, but these are not ordinary times. In fact, in view of the urgent demands of the present situation, which tests the very existence and future of the labor movement, the negative aspects of the outcome of the conference cannot be ignored.

A formal, correct decision was registered in support of the victory over fascism, and in support of national unity for victory, but it was not followed by any positive indication of the labor movement's role within national unity. This was a gaping void in the leadership and outcome of the Conference. It was not incorrect to deal with postwar issues which now require the attention of the movement, but it is obvious that the most elaborate treatment of these questions cannot be accepted as an alibi for silence and inaction on the present burning war issues and the political situation—silence on the activities of the pro-fascists in Britain, and on production, war finance, and taxation. There is plenty of value in generalizations about the future postwar structure of industry and the relations of state controls and industry—but on the present urgent questions of state controls, the strengthening of their democratic character and efficiency, and the appointment of controllers from outside interests concerned, there was silence.

On India there was worse than silence. Discussion was strangled despite twelve resolutions—tabled by affiliated organizations—and the Conference broke up without a decision or declaration of policy. Here

is a first class issue of democratic war policy involving the whole future of the war in the Far East and the question of the acceptance of the Atlantic Charter. Reaction is thrusting aside the alliance of 400,000,000 people. Urgent representatives from China, the United States, Australia, are rebuffed. President Roosevelt's personal envoy is forbidden to meet India's leaders. Indian political leaders are forbidden to meet to reach a settlement and unity. Sixty thousand are thrown into prisons, thousands killed, wounded, or flogged; a shameful White Paper is issued to slander the democratic anti-fascist National movement of the Indian people. All this is done with the official condonation and approval of the Labor Party as set down in official declarations and a pamphlet on India. Here was a sacred duty of the labor movement in conference to speak its mind, to thrash out the issue, and to reach a decision. The question was shelved.

It is this failure of current leadership that produced the inevitable negative effect of the outcome of the Conference. Divi-

sion of leadership above, silence on vital current issues, confusion of tendencies below in local parties, the continued dwindling of membership in the past year, a fall not only of individual membership by 7,839, but also now of trade union membership by 24,519—such things become a picture wholly out of relation to the real advancing strength, confidence, and militant spirit of the organized working class movement.

In the light of this situation we must now see the reason why the Conference, despite a considerable minority vote, failed to respond to the call of unity and the consequent immediate tasks in the advance toward unity.

The debate on unity, on the part of the opponents of affiliation, was most striking in its singular remoteness from any living issue. Speeches of 1922 could be repeated in 1943 with no sense of anachronism. The familiar real world and the harsh contours of the common struggle disappeared from view and gave place to the debaters' happy hunting ground of irrelevant quota-

tions and unhistorical memories—very weak bullets with which to fight fascism, but apparently very powerful arguments against unity. The anti-fascist forces' passionate pleas for unity against fascism on Monday could be forgotten on Wednesday. The debate appeared to develop in a fantastically unreal world removed from space or time, in which there is neither war nor fascism, nor any other reality confronting the working class, but only the Elysian picture of uninterrupted electoral progress. In this picture the Labor Party is slightly inconvenienced by Red bogeys to be kept at arm's length; delegates who had just pledged themselves to slaughter fascists in a colossal world holocaust shuddered at the thought of "violence," of "bloodshed"; Mr. Morrison could wax sarcastic at the idea of extra-constitutional methods being employed by reactionaries against the working class as some far-fetched hypothesis of Communists. In the face of fascism, in the face of Europe today, in the face of the destruction of all the working class movements of the world, not a single argument against unity was employed which had not been used by German Social Democracy before Hitler. The arguments were not in keeping with the issues of our time.

THE lesson is clear. The issue of working class unity cannot be separated from the problem of the whole political life and activity here. The key problem of the present stage in the campaign for working class unity equally involves affiliation as the best working solution within the forms and conditions of the British Labor movement, and every form of cooperation pending such solution.

The central task now is to develop the widest political activity and the campaign of the entire labor movement on all vital issues: unity of the United Nations; settlement with India; war production and post-war aims; winning of the Beveridge Report; service pay and pensions as decided by the Conference; health, housing, food production; social and economic questions combining labor's postwar aims with present war needs. Here, through living activity, away from obsolete, academic abstract arguments, can be learned the lesson of unity, the sense of common aims and common tasks, and of strength through common effort; the necessity for all forces to work together, overcoming old, deep-rooted suspicions.

The decisions of the Conference provide the initial basis for such a campaign and the revival of activity in the labor movement. It would have been better if the outline of the more general principles laid down had been filled in with more positive concrete leadership and a call for a campaign on the present issues. But what the conference failed to accomplish must, and can, be made good by the initiative of the entire movement. R. PALME DUTT.



Occupied Europe

# I AM A WAC

*"How the women in uniform go through their basic training. "We are extremely serious about the business of being a soldier in skirts." . . . Overseas duty preferred."*

*We are happy to print the story below, giving the experiences and observations of a member of the WAC, not only for its intrinsic interest to our readers but because it serves indirectly to answer the recent defeatist campaign of slander against this vital war organization of women. We doubt that many Americans were taken in by the Nazi-inspired charges of "immorality" directed against the WACs—charges put forth without any supporting evidence and circulated in newspapers like Captain Patterson's "Daily News," one of whose staff members is now under indictment as a Japanese agent. Nevertheless, the source of rumors, even the most treasonable, is not always known to the public at large, and canards about members of our armed forces have the particularly sinister aim of crippling recruitment and shaking morale. The story printed below, by a former reader of NEW MASSES, typifies the experience of WAC members: it indicates their patriotism and their devotion to the crucial work they have chosen in the winning of this war.—The Editors.*

CIVILIANS always want to know "What Is a WAC Like?" That's as difficult a question to answer as "What Is an American?" For we come, literally, from all walks of life. I suppose I'm as typical as any: I'm twenty-two, had a high school education, and have worked as a salesgirl and later as a stenographer in a large corporation. My older brother is in the Navy, and my younger brother is on his way to becoming an air cadet. Having someone close to you in the service is what usually draws most of us into the WAC.

But outside of that, we're as varied as the chorus in "Ballad For Americans." For instance, sleeping in the bunks nearest mine in our barracks, there's a woman who was a shoe buyer for a big midwestern department store, an ex-violin player in a national symphony orchestra, a former advertising executive, a waitress, a pulp story writer, and a grandmother who drove a tractor on her own farm for more than twenty years. So you see, you can't say any one of us is a typical WAC.

This much, though, I will vouch for—in any of us. We are extremely serious about the business of being a soldier in skirts. Not that we don't enjoy talk fests at night, or Saturday evening dances at the Service Club. But all of us are volunteers—we didn't have to join the WAC. We had to feel pretty strongly about the war to join in the first place. Now that we're in it, we want just one thing—to win it as



WAC member Jean Ripley of Guilford, Conn., sounds a reveille. She learned to blow a bugle several years ago, for the Girl Scouts. Now she does it for the WACs at Scott Field, Ill., the parent school of radio of the Army Air Forces' technical training command. This photograph was taken when she blew the first reveille for the WACs at the school.

quickly as possible. And because our basic training period is so short (only four weeks), there's a lot to be crammed into the time. We may never have to use our knowledge learned here of defense against chemical attack, for example; still, it's like a parachute. If you need it. . . !

WE FEEL we've all come a long, long way from that first scared-green morning at the Induction Center when we were sworn in and took the oath of allegiance.

Then some of us were worried—one girl I remember in particular, for it was the first time she had ever been away from home in her life. And there were a couple of others who were thrilled just at the idea of wearing a uniform, and didn't worry about what might accompany the khaki. I for one had many misgivings: what would it be like to sleep in a barracks with a hundred or more other females. How would I ever get up before sunrise every morning, and could my feet stand the daily drilling that I knew they had to do, come rain, snow, or sleet! Suppose I got put on KP? And wouldn't the whole idea smack a little of regimentation? Besides, why call it an army when none of them was ever going to fire a gun?

At that time it didn't occur to me that I was being patronizing about my own sex. But unconsciously I had taken over that

attitude of "the poor little helpless woman who screams at the sight of a mouse, can't keep a budget, and wears hats that look like omelets." If I have learned one major lesson in the WAC, it's to respect American women. Yes, not only the Chinese and the British and the Russians, but American women as well. I am honestly proud to be able to say that.

But I'm getting ahead of my story. For all the questions I was asking myself were answered gradually during training period. They didn't all get checked off my mental list the minute I stepped off the train, on my way to the Women's Army Corps for the first time. . . .

THERE were about thirty of us on the train, and we were met promptly at the station by a trim WAC officer, wearing a yellow armband on her sleeve to show that she was a guide. Head erect, back straight, she led us out to the big army truck that was idling at the curb. Already our high heels and flower-topped bonnets began to seem out of place, and I tried to straighten my typewriter-bent spine. For the driver of that huge ton-and-a-half truck was a WAC! She had been trained, the officer told us on the way out to camp, at the special WAC Motor Corps School down at Daytona Beach, Fla. There she learned literally to "drive anything on wheels," and—even more important—how to make her own motor repairs.

As soon as we arrived at camp, we were conducted to the Processing Area. There we received shots against typhoid, tetanus, etc.; were given our uniforms and equipment, and then personal interviews to determine what job each of us could best fill in the WAC.

As a trained stenographer, I was slated for Administrative Specialist work. But don't think for a minute that all WACs do paper work only. Besides the Motor Corps I mentioned, there are also a WAC Radio School out in Kansas City, Cooks and Bakers School, and many other highly specialized jobs. To name just a few—drafting, photographic laboratory work, weather observation, parachute rigging, bombsight repairing, and a score of others. Keep in mind that each of these jobs had previously been done by an enlisted man who could now be freed for a firsthand crack at fascism.

During our classification interview, we were also given our choice of serving in this country or abroad. Over ninety percent of the girls chose overseas duty.

Next we were assigned to a regular

company, and I'll try to give you a picture of a typical day here at the post. Lights are turned on by the C.Q. (Charge of Quarters) promptly at 6:15 AM. Ten minutes later the cannon goes off, and then the bugle for reveille just five minutes after that. By that time yawns and stretchings have given way to crisp commands of "On the double, girls!", and we get into our uniforms and hurry outside to fall in for roll call. After that, we march to mess, and a half hour later comes "policing"—when we clean the barracks and make our beds (hospital corners always, and a demerit if you don't remember. Which means you soon remember!).

At 8:05 our first class begins—usually close-order drill. Then three more classes, each a forty-five-minute period. Classes, by the way, cover most of the same subjects that regular army men receive during their basic training period, too. Such subjects as First Aid, Map Reading, Military Sanitation, Company Supply Procedures, Orientation, Military Customs and Courtesies, Safeguarding Military Information, Personal Hygiene, etc.

Then by 11:30 comes that most welcome of breaks in our schedule—Mail Call. At the stroke of noon, we file into the mess hall for chow again (the food is plentiful and quite good, by the way), and then have a short breathing spell until we resume classes again. The last afternoon class is almost always P.T. (Physical Training), which surprisingly enough we find stimulating rather than tiring at the end of our long day. Then at 4:45 the bugler plays assembly call, and fifteen minutes later comes retreat when the color guard lowers the flag, and everyone on the entire post stands at attention and salutes in the direction of the flag. I'm not ashamed to say that many of the girls have tears in their eyes then. Because though none of us is going to lunge forward at a Nazi, or fire machine-gun bullets at any Japanese, we do feel that we are training to be real soldiers, in the true sense of the word.

SO MUCH for the general picture of life in the WAC. As for my own particular reactions, there are many credits and only a few debits. One on the wrong side of the ledger is that, like the regular army, Negro companies in the WAC are segregated—even though two Negro companies were among the first WAC units to go on active service, and were given a commendation by the post commander! Another grievance is that Current History class is apt to be not very much more pointed than our old high school course in world affairs.

This lack of intellectual guidance is really my chief complaint against the WAC. I've noticed that some—too many—of the girls aren't really concerned about the progress of the war at all—Pacific or Atlantic side. When a war

movie is shown at the Post Theater, they gripe. "Haven't we got enough of the army all day long? I'd rather see a good musical with Bing Crosby, or something funny with Bob Hope."

This attitude is not exclusive with the Women's Army, so don't go jumping to conclusions about featherweight-feather-bob brains! I know from talking to soldiers on trains and at dances here on Saturday nights, that many of the men feel the same way. When they get an occasional free hour, and want to read, they pick up *The Adventures of Superman*, not *Guadalcanal Diary*. And in a way you can't blame them. Soldiers do need relaxation from the job of soldiering. But it's just as important for them to understand what the war is all about as it is for civilians. More important, really, because they're going to meet fascism firsthand. And possibly die for democracy—without ever finding out what it means.

That's why I for one would like to see Current History taught with more vigor and less vagueness. There are other small things that could be done, too. I think it's in the US Information Building in Washington that they have a huge map, pin-dotted to show current battles, and news bulletins on a convenient nearby board. There's no reason why we couldn't have something like that here: if not for every Day Room in every barracks, then at least one large one over in the Service Club.

For few of us take the trouble to buy a newspaper every day at the PX. And even if we do, the local papers around camp don't have the best coverage you could hope for. So what do we do? We just manage to catch the headlines on the radio—and then someone comes along and switches to a station with a jazz band!

To remedy this, I wish it were possible to introduce—along with my other suggestions—an Evening Discussion Hour. True, many of the girls wouldn't attend at first. They'd say—quite rightly—they didn't have the time: that they had to wash clothes, polish shoes, and write a letter home. But if it were a stimulating, thought-provoking session, it could take up less than an hour, and still do a lot of good. (I don't think any WAC would say she didn't waste at least half an hour a day in gossip or walking to the PX for a coke.) Then, if it were as good as it should be, the word would soon get around camp, and the girls would come. Even once a week, it would help counteract the appalling apathy. At each meeting, a different WAC could be group leader and cover one specific subject—say, "The Meaning of the Atlantic Charter," "Underground Resistance to Fascism," "What Kind of a Postwar World for Women?", etc. Questions could be raised from the floor, informally, or if that didn't work out efficiently, the questions could be written out beforehand if the subject of the discussion was posted early enough in the week.

During such an hour a little time could be spent improving morale by answering the "gripes" we all get once in a while. Healthy airing of them would do a lot to improve the conditions. And possibly suggestions for improving our daily schedule, or suggestions about better ways to get our jobs done around the post.

I feel that discussions such as these would be of benefit not only to individual WACs but to the Women's Army as a whole. For if we can be made to realize not only the nature of the enemy, but what we are fighting to preserve as well—then the



As far back as the days of the American Revolution, there were women like Molly Pitcher (shown above at the Battle of Monmouth) who not only worked at home for victory but stood by the men in actual combat. The WACs of today carry forth, in organized fashion, a tradition which Molly Pitcher symbolized.

WAC could function as a more progressive (and therefore more productive) branch of the service. And taking a long-term view, the girls who leave the WAC after the war is won would be able to go home as more intelligent wives and mothers, and as better citizens.

ON THE whole, though, the WAC is an extremely democratic organization. All officers must now come up through the ranks. (It was only in the initial stage that they were sent to Officers Candidate School without having passed through basic training.) This makes the officers more tolerant and sympathetic to the enlisted personnel. And for our part, when an officer "gigs" us at Saturday morning inspection for not having shoes lined up properly under the bed, or for leaving a thin layer of dust alongside the foot locker—well, that officer has undoubtedly gone through the same experience herself when she was a raw trainee.

The WAC celebrated its first birthday some months ago, so it is no longer a mere experiment. True, when a company of WACs moves into a regular army camp, it does take a few days for the boys to stop whistling. But when they see for themselves that the old chestnut about "lady drivers" doesn't hold for a WAC from the Motor Pool, and when they watch us drill as precisely as any of them—well, the whistles change their tune. We try to do our jobs efficiently and unobtrusively, and it really works out that way. For you see, when a WAC company moves out "into the field," we take along everything we're going to need. That means our own cooks and butchers, all our own equipment, and some companies even have their own WAC MPs! That way we feel we are never a burden to the regular camp we are assigned to, for we never "get in their hair."

Just being a member of the WAC requires us to be on call twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. That means we are always standing by—ready for any emergency. Generally, our weekends from Saturday afternoon to Sunday night are free, but we are prepared to work straight around the clock, if necessary. And at the risk of repeating myself, I want to emphasize that every WAC who does go out on active duty in the field is relieving at least one soldier for combat. Frequently, she can replace two or even three men.

By now the novelty of the uniform and the salute and the frequently heard "Yes, Ma'am!" has worn off. But to be a member of the first Women's Army in the history of our country, to know that at last women are being given the opportunity to show that we can do an equal job with men—that is no novelty. It is a constant surge of pride that beats like a pulse, regular as the cadence of soldiers' footsteps marching forward . . . to victory.

A. H.

## READERS' FORUM

### From the USSR

TO NEW MASSES: I am writing to thank you for the very excellent review of *Wide Is the Gate*, broadcast on your radio program. I am also enclosing a letter which has just reached me from a Soviet writer, and which might be of interest to your readers. I don't know how much news you get from the Soviet Union in these trying days.

Monrovia, Calif.

UPTON SINCLAIR.

Dear Comrade Sinclair,

I was much delighted when I read your last novel, *Dragon's Teeth* (some chapters were published in the magazine *International Literature* in December 1942) and I send to you my best wishes!

I am an old admirer—fifteen years ago I wrote a book about your works *Upton Sinclair*, *Popular Essay*, and translated into the Russian language your *Book of Society*—but I must confess to you that none of your works gave me as much pleasure as the novel *Dragon's Teeth*. In the past few years I wrote many things describing the wild German Nazism—many of them were interesting and didactic, but not one was to me so interesting, clever, deep, and agitating as *Dragon's Teeth*. Your novel is the most important novel in the great fight which the democratic writers of the freedom-loving nations are waging against the cursed German Nazism.

I am a Soviet writer, a member of the Soviet Writers Union of the USSR (Leningrad section), and I spent almost eight months in my dear native town, Leningrad, during the cruel German siege and bombing, and, well, I also understand what German Nazism means. Because of my poor health I was evacuated from my Leningrad to Baku (Caucasus) where I am living and working as a writer.

I remain with the highest respect to you, dear comrade Sinclair!

Yours truly,

LEO WEISSENBERG.

### Soldiers' Wives

TO NEW MASSES: I was sitting on a train moving through Kansas, a train full of soldiers, overcrowded, with many soldiers' wives and babies for its passengers. I looked into *Look*. There was a story called "Camp-Followers," featuring "Marie," very much glamorized and quite a heroine, as a "Representative American Family." Says *Look*: "Marie follows her husband wherever she can, takes seriously, the job of keeping up his spirits (as well as her own). Like countless wives she is learning self-sufficiency the hard way, travels alone under harassing wartime conditions."

So *Look* calls that self-sufficiency? I have seen these girls, dozens of them and their babies. Young wives, with their little two-year-olds struggling to sleep on the seat beside them, and

in their arms babies whining pitifully. Their bottled milk goes half sour on the train rides; the babies get bellyaches, their little bodies cry out for a clean crib and fresh air and comfortable surroundings. Yes, the trains are filled with these camp followers. I've spoken to them. One mother told me (with no feeling that she is perhaps committing a wrong against her soldier husband, her babies, and even her country):

"I've been traveling back and forth—my husband was stationed for six months in New Jersey, then they sent him to Florida, then to the Coast, and now I think it's Kansas."

A young wife asked me to hold her baby for her in the railroad station in Tulsa, Okla., while she made some phone calls. She wasn't sure yet whether her man was there. I saw another little girl, a soldier's wife, open a folder and show a picture of her husband to the YWCA resident matron. She had lost track of him, and she was penniless. The matron, with an overcrowded Y, gave the girl a cot in her own bedroom. "I can't turn them down," she told me.

After I'd held my new friend's baby for forty minutes she returned. "I don't know yet," she said, sounding resigned, and began unpacking a paper shopping bag. "I'll wait here. I'll hear from him."

I don't agree with *Look* that this is self-sufficiency. As this problem of wives helplessly tagging after their husbands multiplies itself, with its effect on the soldiers' morale, on the children's health, and on our transportation difficulties, it becomes a nice little fifth column on its own.

If *Look* had looked around a bit, it could have found many soldiers' wives being glamorous in overalls. Why doesn't it write about the Marys and Sallys whose letters to their husbands read like this: "Dear John; we're doing fine, with what I get from the allotment and my wages at the plant. You know Mrs. Jones who lives in the swell house with the tile roof; she's taking care of our little Jane and Mrs. Smith's girl. Mrs. Smith and I are working out a shift in the evenings. One night I watch both kids and she goes to the movies, the next night it's the other way around. You don't have to worry about us. I'm sure learning fast; I'm almost as good a riveter as some of those old timers."

That's where *Look* might find some really self-sufficient soldiers' wives—in our unions, in our war plants. These young wives are developing social programs, learning and participating through their unions in the many activities by which women can contribute to victory. Yes, and they're making the guns for victory.

Wives like these make their men better soldiers and better fighters. *Look* would do the country a service if it started a crusade to educate those wives who still don't understand it's wrong to "follow their husbands wherever they can." I agree, women want to "keep up their husbands' spirits." But they can't do it by hanging a dead weight around their husbands' necks.

NEW YORK.  
DORETTA TARMON.

# THE MAN WHO BOMBED BERLIN—IV

*A sky full of ice and Nazi planes. . . . Between lightning above and anti-aircraft fire below, Sasha Molodchy rides the thunderstorm into Germany.*

**M**AY 22, 1942: For the last ten days we have raided enemy airdromes, railway stations, battle formations, bridges, and river crossings.

*May 23:* We bombed a railway station in X—. The weather was bad. It was a case of instrument flying most of the time. We bombed from a low altitude. AA guns were silent, before and after the bombs dropped. We scored direct hits on the station and it was ablaze.

*May 25:* I have been thinking a great deal about the Germans. What kind of a nation are they? In the first days of their occupation they shot, hanged, and tortured 86,000 people in Kiev; 30,000 in Simferopol; 30,000 in Riga; 25,000 in Odessa; 25,000 in Mariupol; 10,000 in Dnepropetrovsk. All these victims are civil population, peaceful citizens. Why are the Germans acting like wild beasts? Why are they plundering, violating, torturing both old and young? What is the reason for this? It is said that Hitler has corrupted Germans, driven them to despair. Unquestionably the fascists worked hard at depraving German youth. They built up a robber army which has shocked the world by its crimes.

*May 29:* I took off today with a big group to bomb a large enemy airdrome—a base for bomber and fighter planes. In the town of X— we burned and smashed dozens of planes. We sent airdrome structures flying into the air. We sustained no losses. In the vicinity of our objective I nearly crashed into one of our planes when it suddenly raced toward me as we were deploying.

*May 30:* We bombed an airdrome in X—, where we destroyed several Junkers and demolished a hangar. We returned to our base with a hole in the tail.

*June 10:* For the past ten days we have been busy pounding away at the German rear, striking at the enemy airdromes.

*June 11:* What a night! Enroute to our objective we ran into thunder clouds. The downpour was terrible and the noise of rain drowned our roar of motors. The water flooded the left motor and it ceased to function. We continued on one motor and the temperature fluctuated between zero and seven below. Ice gathered on our carburetor, wings, and the glass of our cockpits. I issued an order to drop our

bombs on the reserve target, something we rarely do. We were in low spirits, and having dropped our bombs headed east. There was no improvement in the weather, and we were still flying on one motor. The plane was banking, and I grew utterly exhausted trying to balance it. My hands began to grow numb and I was dizzy. I could no longer feel the pedals. I asked Sergei to help me; he pressed the pedals and thus prevented the plane from swerving. The downpour continued, and the sky was enveloped in dense clouds. The plane was banking and my back ached intolerably. I was ready to drop from fatigue. I bit my lips to keep from falling asleep.

We finally emerged from the rain zone and found ourselves in a warm air current. The ice melted and the silent motor began to hum. The plane was again obedient to my hand. Sergei cracked jokes, told anecdotes. When we landed at our airdrome, the regimental commander congratulated us. "I must admit you had me worried," he said. "I kept looking at my watch. You should have returned. What do you think you were doing? After all, you're not novices that one has to radio you to head back for base."

"We are not accustomed to returning with our bomb load," replied our navigator.

*June 13:* For the past fifteen days we have been operating in the direction of X—, bombing and machine-gunning.

*July 6:* We have been bombing enemy



Map study before the takeoff.

troops and bases during the past few days and nights.

*July 8:* Took off to bomb airdrome X—. I was "leader," with several squadrons following in my wake. With the permission of the command we carried additional explosive flare bombs. Hitherto these had rarely been applied, our flyers fearing that they would betray the location of the planes. I suggested that flare bombs be introduced as a regular practice.

Diving down in the first attack, I dropped four bombs in four different places around the objective. They lit up the airdrome brightly. We then released our bombs. Squadrons appeared on the scene and attacked the objective from all sides. The operation was successful.

*July 10:* We bombed a railway station. Flare bombs were dropped slightly to one side of the station and helped to discover a new railway branch which Germans had laid to "protect" reserve trainloads of gasoline. We broke up the branch line, set fire to gasoline cisterns. The conflagration was tremendous. When we reported on the results of the raid, the regimental commander said, "Henceforth I order all crews to take along on dark nights several sticks of flare bombs to light up the objective."

*July 11:* We bombed a railway junction. My plane was in the lead. As we were homeward bound we discovered that the gasoline tanks had been damaged by AA shell splinters. Gasoline began to gush forth. "Sasha, we burn to death," muttered the navigator. "The dirty skunks have sure crippled our plane."

Our gas was running low, but we made the base. The plane was riddled in seventy places, and the left wheel was pierced.

*July 16:* I was busy inflicting blows on enemy troops and communications.

*July 17:* It all happened just as I was getting ready to land my plane. It was dark and the sky overhead was a mass of low-hanging clouds. At an altitude of 100 meters aerial gunners opened machine-gun fire. I figured out that something had gone wrong. I asked what was the matter but got no answer. They evidently didn't hear me. Their machine guns continued to blaze away. "There are German fighters on top of us," yelled Sergei. "Look out!"

No further explanation was needed. German guns and machine guns were in

action. Our AA gunners opened murderous fire. I began to climb but there was no escaping. Together with a Messerschmitt we were caught in a ring of fire. The German was in a tight corner, but so were we. Our AA gunners meant to teach him a lesson for his insolence and they were fully determined not to let their "guest" get away. Sergei shouted, "It is enough to make a cat laugh. That mad devil will be brought down and we along with him."

The Messerschmitt got it good and proper. We saw it spinning to one side, emitting smoke. The AA guns were silent.

We landed and heaved a sigh of relief. The plane was scarred by splinters—our splinters, if you please! "What was the bright idea of hounding me?" I asked the AA gunners the following morning. "Nice friends you are." "Who asked you to come in with a German hanging on your tail?" was the laughing reply.

*July 20:* We are off to strike a first blow at the city of Koenigsberg. The meteorologists forecast foul weather. Our squadrons, following in my wake at long intervals, will appear on the scene after Sergei and I set fire to and light up the objective. The sky is overcast with clouds. We try skirting them from the south but without success. We head north only to find things far worse—our navigator can see neither ground nor stars. We are flying blind. It is snowing and the temperature is dangerous for us—between zero and seven below. Ice gradually begins to gather on the plane. We climb higher, and although colder it is less dangerous. We radio to the airdrome: "Continuing flight in clouds." We are flying in a snowstorm. The cockpit is swept by snow. The snow is in my face and in my eyes. Time drags and I begin to think my watch lies.

"How far have we still to go?" I ask Sergei. "It seems to me that we are long past our target."

"A little more than 300 kilometers," comes consolingly from Sergei.

"I am utterly exhausted and feel like a wet rag." "Hold on, my friend, we will make it," say the members of the crew, trying to cheer me up, and they crack jokes and flyers' anecdotes. "If I know my onions, we're over Koenigsberg," reports the navigator. My fatigue passes instantly. The target is below us. It is covered by clouds. We fly over the objective to provoke AA guns into action and make sure that we are not mistaken. Fire opens from the ground. Fine! We drop lower and release the bombs. We can hear the AA explosions. We zigzag across clouds, winging our way on return flight, and we again battle through clouds. Thunder clouds stop our plane and it begins to bank and becomes increasingly difficult to pilot.

A great lassitude creeps over me. I put

a bottle of smelling salts to my nose and after that I take a thermos flask and pour myself a glass of hot tea with lemon. I am feeling better, but am using oxygen apparatus a great deal of the way. We dare not fly at low altitude for fear of ice coating on the plane. Aerial gunners report that "oxygen will last only another fifteen minutes." I order the crew to use oxygen sparingly, and shut off the emergency tap. We were some eight hours in the clouds, flying blind there and back. At dawn we crossed the front line. The clouds dispersed, and the ground stretches out below like a sea in the morning mist. We landed at an emergency airdrome and rested for awhile, then refueled, and thirty minutes later we were at our own base. At headquarters we were told that we had carried out an unparalleled operational flight.

*July 22:* It is a quiet moonlit night, but we know that this second flight to Koenigsberg is not going to be an easy one. The sky gradually changes, the moon hides its face and is enveloped in clouds. The temperature drops and ice crystallizes on the wing edges, propeller blades and tail, bracing wires, etc. We switch on the de-icing apparatus in carburetors. The right and left motors stop. I try swerving, steering the plane from right to left. Nothing doing! We seem to be out of luck today. The foul weather zone is too big. Our maneuverability is dependent on the fuel supply.

We decide to fly straight ahead. The plane begins to vibrate. Kulikov gets busy finding the root of the trouble, looks out of the cockpit. I too am worried and begin to climb. The plane increases its ceiling with difficulty. Will the de-icing apparatus win the duel with nature? Kulikov advises flying at a lower altitude. I bring the plane down to 3,000 meters. We find ourselves in a warm air current. The ice coating melts and gusts of wind blowing from the sides send the plane rocking. The ground is invisible, and it is impossible to establish bearings by stars or landmarks, but it seems we are keeping to our course. Sergei catches sounds of radio stations and maps the shortest route. We took off from the airdrome in a whole group and were flying together in the beginning, but there is not a single plane anywhere near us now.

It is raining hard and the clouds are charged with electricity, sparks of fire to the left and right of us. Our plane trembles as if it had been hit. Deafening peals of thunder drown out the roar of the motors. Rain is followed by hail. Flashes of lightning light up the sky. Then it is utterly dark and in this formidable darkness you see electrified metallic parts of the plane shining, tongues of fire racing across glass and antenna. Water is streaming into the cockpit.

"How are you feeling, Sasha?" asks Kulikov. "All right," I reply. "Could be worse." "Devil's own weather," he grum-

bles. "I've done bad flying in my life, but I have never seen such a merry-go-round."

The "merry-go-round" keeps on. Vertical air currents send the plane down. There are rapid and unexpected changes in altitude. The instruments react accordingly. They leap and jump and the plane begins to feel the increase in weight. Lightning flashes on all sides. "What if it strikes the antenna?" asks Sergei. "It wouldn't dare to," I jestingly reply to cheer him up. Cases of lightning "barging" into a plane have, as a matter of fact, been rare. The rocking becomes intolerable. I drop very low and fly just above the ground for some time. Afterward I rise to an altitude of 1,000 meters.

Above us is a thunderstorm. This refreshing July downpour with fireworks of orange and blue streaks of lightning may be pleasant on the ground but it is a nuisance as far as we are concerned. A fighter plane could zoom up and fly above the clouds. We have oxygen apparatus, but it is rather dangerous with a bomb load to climb too high today.

Panfilov receives a radiogram from Moscow. We are ordered to skirt the thunder and head for our objective. We reply "Righto." "Where are we now?" I ask Kulikov. He names points. The thunder clouds grow less as we continue. The rain stopped. Sure enough a few minutes later a silver ribbon of river gleams below the plane. Sergei is not mistaken. We begin to climb and again encounter a nimbus. The plane begins to rock. Flashes of lightning, sparks on wings and fuselage. Torrents of water turn the cockpit into a veritable bath. We steadily head west.

We are flying northwest and contact a radio station from which we hear strains of dance music through the earphones. Hanses and Gretchens are making merry, unaware of what is coming. Before long we will be striking at the city, and the radio announcer, who on more than one occasion hastened to declare the Soviet air force destroyed, will be the first to dash to the nearest air raid shelter. We catch glimpses of the sky between breaks of clouds, and using the sextant Sergei measures the distance to the polar star. Land flashes below and the dark outlines of the city loom in the distance. Koenigsberg! Sound detectors evidently heard us. The alert is sounded and the city is blacked out. AA guns go into action. We get ready to attack. The plane shakes. The AA guns send up a solid curtain of fire. The bombing is over. We cut through the fire of the AA defense, climb up and circle over the city. Our squadrons appear on the scene and one after another drop their loads. The city is enveloped in fire and smoke. We head for home. Our plane is slightly scratched by splinters and that is all. It looks as if the thunderstorm is over. Any minute I expect to hear jubilant outcries from the navigator. Instead Sergei gives vent to his feelings by singing

at the top of his lungs. Released of its load, our plane carries us lightly and smoothly under the clouds. The raid has been successful. We will soon be home. I will hug Sergei—I wish every pilot such a navigator. You can go flying with him in any weather and into the moon for that matter.

*July 25:* The third flight on Koenigsberg. Flying with me, instead of Vasilyev, is the writer Victor Goltsev. I tried to dissuade him but the obstinate fellow would not be stopped. The command gave the necessary permission. This time the weather is fine and the flight over the "beaten trail" is no strain.

*August 10:* The July 20 Soviet Information Bureau reported the exploit of a bomber crew headed by Sergeant Divichenko. When over the enemy airdrome his bomber was set ablaze by fire from AA artillery and fighter planes and enveloped in flames. He continued at a low level, and destroyed German planes which were standing on the ground. Afterward Divichenko directed the burning plane onto the petrol tanks. Airmen participating in this flight saw thick columns of smoke and tongues of fire from the burning petrol tanks shoot skyward. A few days ago Divichenko, Zhuravlyev, and aerial gunner Mysikov returned to their regiment. Aerial gunner Yeshov perished. "Our bomber hit right over the airdrome," related Sergeant Divichenko. "Flame rapidly spread to the whole left wing. The left motor ceased to function. The plane proceeded heavily and was not obedient to the steering wheel. Mysikov and Yeshov kept up a steady machine gun fire on grounded enemy planes. One after another, several German fighters burst into flame."

A Messerschmitt rushed the burning plane. "Well," thought Divichenko, "if I am to go under I may just as well get my money's worth," and he issued an order to continue to drop bombs on enemy planes. The bombs exploded in the very midst of the German vehicles. Fifteen Messerschmitts were damaged. The bomber, leaving a dense trail of smoke in its wake, was rapidly losing altitude. The crew realized that they had but a few minutes to live but it didn't even enter their minds to bail out in parachutes. What's more, they still had some bombs on board. Divichenko continued to look for a target. He saw a column of German trucks below and without losing a moment dived toward it. Any minute the bombs suspended under the fuselage could explode and the crew would die without causing any damage to the Germans.

There was no time to lose. Flying low over the column they dropped the bombs at an altitude of seventy-eight meters from the ground. A terrible explosion followed. Divichenko does not remember what happened next. Apparently the explosion flung

the plane to one side. It continued to fly for a short while and then fell into a gulley between two hills. Divichenko jumped out of the smashed bomber. In falling he gashed his face and it began to bleed profusely. His clothes were burning. He threw himself on the ground and began to roll in order to extinguish the flames. Zhuravlyev and Mysikov came crawling out of the plane. Yeshov lay dead in the cockpit. They moved in the direction of the forest. After resting a bit and determining their bearings

by compass they struck out for Soviet positions 120 kilometers away. Hungry, covered with wounds, they crossed the front and are eager to get into action again. A Jack London is needed to write about these men of the bomber force to show their courage and will to live.

*August 17:* Preceding week was spent in bombing troops, railway stations, airdromes, and communications.

SASHA MOLODCHY.



Lieut. Col. Itzik Feffer and Prof. Solomon Michoels

*Two men have come to us from the Soviet Union, one a great poet, the other a great artist of the theater. Envoys of the Russian Jews to the American Jews—as well as envoys of the Soviet people to the American people—they bear the message of a united resolve to crush Hitlerism. And their mission has an even deeper meaning. For they speak for all of Soviet culture, for the entire Soviet family of nations; indeed, in a larger sense, they speak for all the fighting and suffering people of the world. On June 8 they brought to an audience of 45,000 Americans, and through them to the whole nation, the plea of those peoples for two essential conditions of victory—unity and the second front.*

*Only minds gangrened with hatred of Russia, like those of the Chanin-Dubinsky gang of the "Jewish Daily Forward," could find any pretext to attack these emissaries of our ally and those who welcomed them. That attack reveals once again that the attackers are servants of fascism and defeatism. Lieut. Col. Itzik Feffer, the beloved Soviet Jewish poet, put it well when he said at the Polo Grounds: "Unity is the surest guarantee of victory. He who speaks against the Soviet Union acts contrary to the interests of our people." Colonel Feffer's colleague, the distinguished actor and member of the Moscow City Council, Prof. Solomon Michoels, won the great assemblage with the force and undeniable truth of his speech. Warning against complacency, he pleaded for "fullest" participation of all anti-fascists in the war. He urged immediate and maximum unity of the Jews of the USSR and those in the United States in the common battle. Their addresses and the response of the other distinguished speakers have no doubt been painfully scrutinized in Berlin by now. The Wilhelmstrasse's open and covert advocates here, those responsible for the Detroit in America, were well rebuked by American people who crowded the Polo Grounds to greet Michoels and Feffer; by Jew and gentile alike, Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, Paul Robeson and Newbold Morris, Albert Einstein and Wendell Willkie, ex-Governor Lehman and Eddie Cantor. In speeches and messages, these men joined with the audience to promise our Russian allies American unity in the war effort—and they mean to see the promise kept.*

## WE, TOO, ARE GUILTY

SOMETIMES I wish I were a Negro. Sometimes it seems that in no other way can I find the basic, elemental ground upon which to fight. Every other position, place, or role seems a compromise or a place in which I am treated better than my deserts because my skin is white. Sometimes I feel that whiteness is a stigma, an inherited mark of shame from which I will never be cleansed until mankind cannot even remember the staggering, unmentionable crimes that have been committed against those whose skins are black.

Let others diagnose the riots. Let others collect statistics, make reports, whitewash officials, and show that in the last analysis the bestial cowardice derived from a lack of hot running water. Let others prate of slow education in race equality; let others speak of housing projects—these things are fine if a little gradual in solving a situation which threatens the life of our nation. For my part, I, at the moment, wish only to plead guilty to being white. I have a fantasy that however wide of the mark such a plea is, it somehow helps, however momentarily, however feebly. If only one Negro reads this and feels that only one white man is filled with a permanent shame because of his race, I think that in itself would help a little.

There are purists, of course, who would say that in indicting the white race I am a poll-taxer in reverse and in all logic they are right. There are others who would say that there is a basic, elemental ground upon which both Negro and white can together fight for a true and generous democracy—and they, too, are right. But for a moment I'd like to apparently abandon logic in the hope that somewhere in the very desertion we will find a glimmer of it.

Therefore I repeat that *every* white man is guilty of monstrous and constant discrimination against his fellow Americans. Do you doubt or deny it? Then it is because the discrimination is so inbred, so implanted in your unconsciously accepted way of life, that you do not even realize it. Can a Negro live next door to you? Can a Negro eat at the restaurant in which you eat? Can he sleep in the same hotel? Can he even, in many instances, attend the same church or school? If the questions seem trite and rhetorical they merely reveal how deeply you have accepted the present situation. If you ask yourself, "But what can I do?" the very interrogation proves your mechanical acceptance of a Hitlerian condition. I say that until Americans constantly and always object to and fight against these myriad forms of humiliation against their fellow Americans, until they cease passively acquiescing in persecution, we are all guilty of persecution. Is there a Negro district, a black ghetto, in your town? Have you ever protested it? How many white Americans have, do you suppose? And yet freedom of movement, freedom to live where one chooses, is bone and blood of the American legend.

FROM the first the Negro has been the bitter dichotomy in American life—the ever present division between the

dream, the ideal, and the fact. As Jefferson penned the words "all men are created equal," he was haunted by the fact that those who were revolting for all mankind were keeping black mankind in chains. The American Negro is the central figure in American history. The Revolution had scarce been won until agitation for Negro freedom began in an attempt to span the awful gulf between the legend of freedom and the fact of slavery.

For the eighty years between the Revolution and the Civil War, slavery was the supreme and dominant issue. Almost 1,000,000 men died that the Negro should have the full rights of the free-born American. And in this fight none fought so valiantly as the Negro, himself. No race ever has fought so long or so courageously or with so much dignity, restraint, and patriotism as has the American Negro. And through the years the success of the American dream could always be gauged by the success of the Negro in his fight for equality. For the Negro and America are bound together and neither can obtain happiness, justice or democracy without the other.

The forces that held him in slavery almost wrecked this nation in 1861. The forces then were those of reaction as are the forces that harry the Negro now and which are equally liable to wreck the country unless they are checked. For seventy-six years after the Civil War the American Negro is again a supreme test for the American nation—a test upon which its continued independence may once more depend. In India, China, Africa, and South and Central America they watch us and upon these people to a great extent depends the course of the war and the world to come. In Europe they watch us and we can be sure that the Nazis are spreading the word of Detroit from one end of Europe to the other. When I was in Berlin and spoke to Nazi officials about their treatment of the Jewish people, they asked with a sneer: "What right have you to speak in view of American treatment of the Negro?"

LET every organization act. Let every trade union, neighborhood group, and church organization pass resolutions condemning the riots, favoring passage of the anti-poll tax bill, the anti-lynch bill, and asking the government to end discrimination in the armed forces and in employment. But let's do more than pass resolutions. Let's appoint committees that work actively against discrimination in our cities and neighborhoods, that take up specific cases of discrimination, and expose fifth column forces working for violence, for until we *act*, we, too, are guilty.

*Editor's Note: Mr. Boyer, who is out of town, will undoubtedly be happy to hear of the stirring meeting in Harlem last Sunday. Seven thousand white and Negro told the President: "I pledge to do all in my power to rally the people of my community, of my city and my country to combat the forces of race hatred and discrimination that are attempting to bring defeat and disgrace to our country and our flag. I pledge to meet the attacks of the instigators of race riots by cementing the closest bond of unity between the American people—Negro and white, Jew and Gentile, native and foreign born, behind our Commander-in-Chief for the total victory over fascist enslavement." New Masses urges its readers to help organize similar meetings in all communities as major steps in forestalling the repetition of Detroit's shame elsewhere in our country.*



## REVIEW and COMMENT

# HIGHROAD TO VICTORY

Max Werner shows, in "Attack Can Win in '43," why an invasion of Europe soon can bring unconditional surrender. The alternative: a "seven years' war." . . . Reviewed by John Stuart.

ATTACK CAN WIN IN '43, by Max Werner. Little, Brown. \$1.75.

**M**OST reviewers prefaced their remarks about Mr. Werner's latest book with the observation that he possessed extraordinary prophetic gifts. One commentator went so far as to suggest that he carries a rabbit's foot which helps him correctly gauge the course of military events when other experts are floundering in the murk of self-made confusion. Mr. Werner, I believe, would be the first to disown any of the baggage of the clairvoyant. What he has is an over-all conception of the struggle on which he has built a structure of analysis that makes his contributions mature and fresh. That conception rests in the dynamics of coalition warfare.

There are students of military affairs to whom each passing day presents a new military problem with a concomitant military doctrine. On bleak mornings when things are not going too well, a new doctrine is tailored and the one of the bright morning before discarded. Prejudice and timidity enter the picture at every turn and ignorance completes it. They see what has been relatively a lull on the Eastern Front and immediately they conclude that the Red Army perhaps is incapable of another offensive; or the lull signifies that the Wehrmacht has pulled in its horns and will not strike until it is struck. Pantelleria is shattered from the air and promptly they start digging through their Sevsky and sing hosannas to his dangerous air power tract. Theirs is eclectic thinking that misses the substance of what we fight for and how it is to be won.

Werner transcends the hit or miss method. His is a pattern of thought woven out of facts in motion. He is not hypnotized by statistics open to a half-dozen interpretations; he eschews logistics when they are used to rationalize inaction. His dominant idea is coalition—coalition not only of the democratic powers but a coalition of will and morale cemented to materiel. It is hardly surprising then that in his new book Werner repeats the word coalition so that if nothing else is remembered at least the concept will have etched itself on the reader's mind. The burden of his argument is equally pointed: coalition is meaningless unless it chooses a road of ac-

tion. And in 1943, after four years of indecision, there is no other path but an invasion of Europe. It is either victory in the immediate months or a "seven years' war." Germany's last hope is Allied stagnation.

Our two cardinal sins of the past have been to exaggerate the Nazi power and underestimate the Red Army. In the winter of 1942 the Red offensive surprised the Germans as much as it did the staffs in Washington and London. The latter had no over-all strategy to take advantage of the German crisis "that towered behind the shining facade of German successes." It would seem that the Prussian military tradition had put the western Allies in a trance while they exhibited little or no faith in the Soviet leadership—men of plain background to whom German generalship was neither disarming nor overwhelming. It was a myth that the Nazis constructed and it was a myth that led our military planners into inertia. Werner writes it was exactly "those who formerly put their trust in the superior strength of the French Army and the outstanding skill of the French High Command who now believed in the inimitable talents of the German generals—after all, one of the old, traditional military powers had to take over the leadership! The Battle of Flanders and the Stalingrad-Don-Caucasus battle gave



Max Werner

the lie to these gullible believers on both counts."

The conclusion, emphasizes Werner, is as apparent as the observation which gives rise to it. Western military minds must purge themselves of archaic conceptions and face the problem of how to gather the fruit of Soviet victories. For the supreme reality is that the Soviet forces comprise the greatest offensive power in land warfare. "In the chain of crucial military facts the Russian power must be grasped and used in relation to the crisis of German warfare." In Werner's pursuit of this central idea he makes the point that it hardly matters which particular battle the Nazi machine has lost. What is overshadowing is that the Wehrmacht has lost the strategic initiative and that that circumstance cannot be changed by any new moves. "This crisis did not drop from the skies." It is the product of the Red Army's great battles—particularly that at Stalingrad.

Evaluating this crisis and acting upon it is the mark of realistic military leadership. Otherwise the Allied command will be making the same mistake it made in the final two years of the last war when it failed to judge the meaning of the upheaval in the German general staff. Then inner controversies had arisen in Berlin. No one estimated properly the significance of Falkenhayn's dismissal or how seriously the battles of Verdun, the Somme, and Flanders had exhausted the Germans. Neither Washington, nor London, nor Paris realized how close to the edge of disaster Germany already stood in the spring and summer of 1918. The Allies floundered, guessed their way about until they almost made the critical blunder of fixing the date for their offensive too late.

**W**ERNER relates this illuminating chapter of military history for its obvious value today. Only what in the other war had been kept a closely guarded secret is this time the property of the whole world. The recurrent dismissals of Nazi generals after their failures in the East make it immeasurably easier to read the perplexities that have placed the Wehrmacht in a straitjacket. Will we exploit this crisis and take the war of coalition out of its "rudimentary phase," thereby making 1943 the year of final decision? Will we change over

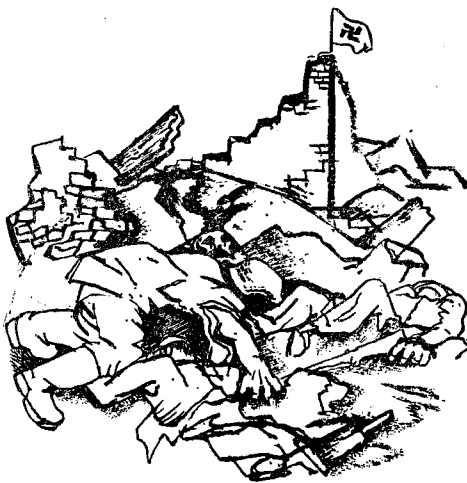
from "waging three parallel wars"—the British, the American, and the Soviet—into one unified war? Our leaders have undeniably answered these questions affirmatively. They have also undeniably accepted the principle of coalition warfare but the application has lagged.

It has lagged even though we have made distinct progress in meeting the requirements of war on the grand scale. Great Britain and the United States are not yet fully conscious of their own power, writes Werner. Both Allies have materiel superiority; they have, at long last, freedom of action and their military maturity was reached in the battles of Libya and Tunisia. Yet with this primacy of production, of arms, and of reserves we have hesitated to move. It is also clear that on the battlefronts we need not be stronger than the whole of the Wehrmacht. All that is necessary is that we be stronger than what the Nazi apparatus is able to command outside the Eastern Front. Our superiority over the entire Wehrmacht will come only when we fight in conjunction with the Red Army. Or stated in another way, the function of the second front is to upset the relative Soviet-German balance by an Allied invasion of the continent. Invasion is not alone a matter of relieving Soviet forces. It is the very heart of attaining victory through coalition action.

As FOR the invasion of Europe, Werner defines it as composed of many combined operations with the key blow coming from fortress Britain into western Europe. It must be brought to bear by the strongest possible Anglo-American forces. This is the major front supported by other flanking moves running in two directions: one from the British Isles to Northern Europe, the other from North Africa to Europe's soft underbelly. A third set of operations can consist of many diversions at different points.

It will not be an easy project but it spells the beginning of the end. It also closes the door on the very vociferous school of comfortable victory through the autonomous use of air power; it dooms the school that holds that the Pacific theater must be given priority; it kicks the pinnings from under the believers in strategic isolationism—a declining sect at any rate; and it will muffle the bleating of those who deliberately miscalculate the extent of the job required for victory.

So far as the air power theorists are concerned, Werner makes it quite clear that what is under debate is not the usefulness of aviation, but the Seversky, Ziff, and Huie doctrines that have mushroomed around it. These sectarians have created confusion about matters of strategy and done great harm with their idolatry of the heavy bomber. Theirs is a "doctrine of technological isolationism," says Werner, which divorces the air force from other fighting



arms. Such dogma hampers coalition warfare by emphasizing a type of strategy not in keeping with the structure of the Allied armies. But more important, "long distance bombardments of the enemy's industrial and economic centers bring no military decision whatever. . . . They hit only the enemy's supplies—not his fighting forces. . . . It [the heavy bomber] does not wage a war of military decision. . . ."

"German-dominated Europe," continues Werner, "is ripe for invasion, not because of the destruction wrought from the air, but because the Wehrmacht has been bled white and worn down in Russia. . . . Furthermore, aerial warfare of this nature—an economic blockade in the air—is bound to be protracted. Intrinsically it is a war of attrition. The doctrine of exclusive air power is the inevitable renunciation of a swift decision of the war. It operates by technical means that can take effect only in a prolonged war. And it overlooks the given opportunities of a swift victory, of victory through active coalition strategy, of an all out offensive launched by the combined Allied fighting forces. 'If the construction of this striking aerial force begins in 1942, it could safely be planned in 1945,' Mr. Seversky writes. The question is only what is supposed to go on until 1945? During the war a great country like the United States cannot take a furlough. The doctrine of air power interposes into the Allied conduct of war a time vacuum, an interval of inaction and waiting. But in war time is of the essence. . . ."

This quotation is the merest highlight of Werner's trenchant reply to the air-power mystics. And it equals his rejoinder to the Pacific Firsters whose strategy is also calculated to protract the war. "It is no paradox to say that if the United States were to turn away from the European theater as the decisive direction and concentrate her forces in the Pacific, the struggle in the Pacific would last longer than if Americans were concentrated on the European-Atlantic front." For the strategic isolationists, Werner has also a reasoned contempt. The idea of waiting from two to three years in order to build a mammoth American army before undertaking decisive

action is a peril to the coalition and to the country. And if the "art of strategy consists of maneuvering the enemy into untenable positions," then the scale of a European attack must be neither larger nor smaller than the action requires. Limited operations will hardly be satisfactory nor can we afford another Dieppe.

FOR many NEW MASSES readers, Werner's argumentation will not be entirely new. Our own Colonel T. has done a great service week after week in presenting the evidence justifying an immediate invasion. In Werner's book there is, of course, the advantage of an orderly integration of the whole material not possible in weekly pieces. To watch him sweep through the fog of military mumbo-jumbo and relentlessly head his readers to inevitable conclusions is in itself worth the price of admission to his storehouse of tactical and strategical knowledge. His book is brilliant; but that is saying very little about a work that should be required reading everywhere. In the interests of morale, in the interests of clear thinking where muddle-headedness so often prevails, in the interests of the urgencies of the hour—there are few recently published books to match this one. While it is a coincidence, it is also meaningful that the book appeared almost simultaneously with Walter Lippmann's *US Foreign Policy: Shield of the Republic*. In several respects they complement each other, for both are rooted in the idea of coalition, of alliance—one on the military plane and the other on the political. If I have anything to quarrel with in Werner, it is his avoidance of the political problems of coalition warfare. I am certain from internal evidence that he knows what they are but he has been unnecessarily cautious to tread easily here. Then there is hardly a word about another dimension in coalition fighting—the guerrilla detachments of Europe and, in particular, the Yugoslav Partisan Army. There are other details with which I would not agree but they are secondary to the major trend of his ideas and the exceedingly useful purpose which they serve—a second front before many more weeks tick away.

JOHN STUART.

## Shays' Rebellion

THE REGULATORS, by William Degenhard. Dial. \$3.

IN A Narrator's Foreword to the present novel, Mr. Degenhard opens up his subject for the reader. That subject—Shays' Rebellion—has received little attention from the historian: "scarcely a half dozen volumes dealing with the period have found a circulation." Though the causes of this historical unconcern may be more interesting to us than Mr. Degenhard realizes, he has himself become so thoroughly informed about the origins and the records of Shays' Rebellion that I doubt whether

one may find anywhere a better popular account of what went on in western Massachusetts in that troubled year of 1786.

For that reason alone Mr. Degenhard's book is worth reading. *The Regulators* is a book about a short but bitter popular struggle for economic demands by a group of farmers, revolutionary patriots, who had been the backbone of the war for independence in New England. It is quite true that these farmers chose to be militant at a time when the union of the States was at a precarious balance, and that England stood ready to seize upon any division to reaffirm her claims. Yet the Tory view of Shays' Rebellion would have us believe that the government of Massachusetts was taking a principled stand for a strong, binding central authority. Actually, the forward movement of a young nation was being arrested by the failure of Governor Bowdoin and the General Court to heed the economic problems of the farmers; the solutions which they fought for were a necessary step toward economic independence. But the wealthy merchant class of Boston contributed to the crisis by sucking up all the "hard cash" in sight in the course of their business deals, at the same time that they insisted on the policy of selling farms and all farm property at auction for the non-payment of notes. The cashless farmers were whisked off to jail as debtors while the land stood idle and no crops were planted. As always, Tory principle fronted for Tory pocketbook policy.

What I have said above is not a simple distillation of Mr. Degenhard's views, either as a novelist or as a commentator on history in the Foreword. Certainly his shading is not colored by the Tory versions of Shays' Rebellion. The men at Boston who determined the state's policy are shown as petty, hard-fisted politicians, and the men they listened to were merchants who would try to play any political situation to their own financial advantage. Even Sam Adams is shown as providing a political philosophy which would justify the course that Governor Bowdoin followed: arguing that the Regulators had thrown off the constraints of "civil liberty" in favor of the unsocial dictates of "natural liberty." But this hoary dictum, as Mr. Degenhard's hero points out, bore little relation to the realities of that moment.

THOUGH Mr. Degenhard has presented the Tory view more "adequately" than his Narrator believes in the Foreword, an evaluation of the significance of Shays' Rebellion is limited pretty largely to his introductory remarks. I would like to suggest that the issues seem to me to appear more simply and clearly, on the basis of my reading of the narrative, than the author admits. The strong central government that the Federalists wanted was not designed to advance the interests of expanding democracy, but rather to check

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them. The conduct of the government of Massachusetts was a concrete instance of this tendency in formation. First and last, the "rebellious" farmers sought a redress of grievances: their political demand, the full participation of the whole electorate in state government; their economic demand, relief from financial strangulation brought on by the shortsighted policies of the moneyed class. It is scarcely to the credit of the Massachusetts Federalists that they kept the lid on. Even though it was unsuccessful, Shays' Rebellion gave momentum to those democratic forces on which the solidification and expansion of the young nation depended.

As a novelist, Mr. Degenhard has translated his knowledge of the documents into an absorbing account—sometimes day-by-day—of the beginnings and growth of the Regulators (the farmers gave themselves the name, soon attached to their organization and the whole movement). But Mr. Degenhard has deferred to one of the oldest conventions of historical fiction: he has "leavened" history with sex, romance, and adventitious excitements. The penalty for this concession is, of course, that the lovers of two-fisted action and well-timed clinches will discover history an obstacle in the path of true love (as history generally is intended to be when it is far away from the facts). The mature reader, however, will find that the story of the Regulators needs no sugar-coating. To him the novel must seem strangely diluted, no matter how carefully the sub-plots are worked in, no matter how vivid some of the peripheral characters.

It is a point worth noting that Daniel Shays is not the central figure of the novel. He is always viewed from the outside—through his friends, his lieutenants—and through the eyes of "our hero," Warren Hascott, a robust extrovert, who, in his redoubtable constitution and ability to get around, seems to be the early American ancestor of Superman. And like Superman, the more we see of Warren Hascott, the less interesting he becomes. His character defies succinct analysis, not because of its complexity, but because of its meaningless variety. He is a "bundle of contradictions" who somehow never surprises. He springs to life from the printed page as soon as you ask yourself, now what would Clark Gable have done in this situation? The answer comes at once. Pleasing to both sexes, Warren Hascott flouts the bad 'uns, assails while he practices the double standard. He is as unattractive a hero as one can well imagine, but perhaps he embodies an unsuspected veracity—if we can accept a popular American idea of successful manhood as being deeply rooted in the New England past.

Daniel Shays by all counts is a far more interesting person to write about than Warren Hascott. Are there reasons why

Shays should not have been made the leading character in the novel? I think it a mistake to assume that historical events become more meaningful when they are spun into a plot which asks us to be concerned with them because they postpone the marriage of two romantic nonentities to the final chapter. As vigorous and able a writer as Mr. Degenhard is, it seems to me that he should have taken the bolder course and limited his story to the events of the Rebellion. After all, Warren Hascott has obviously been devised to take us into both camps, but the gain in spatial movement is hardly worth the consequent dissipation of interest. Mr. Degenhard has a solid grasp of his subject, a fine appreciation of historical forces: he has written a stirring story in spite of the handicap of an outworn formula. If he chooses another historical subject as worthy as this for his next book, I hope that he will break completely with this formula.

ALAN BENOIT.

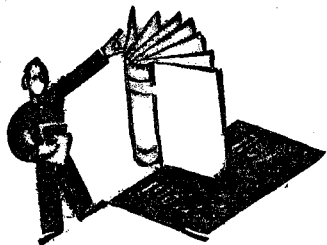
## Dialectical Process

INFANT AND CHILD IN THE CULTURE OF TODAY, the Guidance of Development in Home and Nursery School, by Arnold Gesell, M.D., and Francis L. Ilg, M.D. in collaboration with Janet Learned and Louise B. Ames. Harper. \$4.

How children grow, what care to give them, and where to put them are sharper questions than ever for today's war families. Although the authors of *Infant and Child* recognize the third, i.e. the economic, question as of basic urgency, and although taken as a whole their book constitutes a scientific argument for the necessity of uncramped housing and public child care ("a socialized conservation of the development of infants and young children"), their present study is confined to the description and analysis of the growth of the pre-school child in a relatively secure environment. It should be primarily useful as a practical aid to parents and nursery workers. Information is printed in highly readable form, and theoretical discussions are suggestively flexible.

The detailed "behavior profiles" of children at four weeks, sixteen weeks, twenty-eight weeks, etc., up to five years, should give every harassed parent a sober sense of proportion. Home life and nursery will be calmer if adults know, for example, that at one year the child's growing body may make upright posture more important for him "than meat" so that he insists on being fed in standing position—or that the two-year-old is approachable primarily through things, the three-year-old through words.

Perhaps the authors' greatest contribution to the understanding of child behavior is their insistence throughout that growth is a *dialectical process* ("developmental" is their word). Parents who study Marxism should have a head start—but do we really



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apply our dialectics to the problems of childhood, or do we sometimes play the tyrant and sometimes anarchistically let them grow wild? Theory alone won't rear them; we must know the laws of growth. Here lies the value of Gesell's and Ilg's exposition of the evolution and revolutions of the child's body and mind and social relations. For instance, the "spanking curve" would not come to a peak at two-and-a-half years if parents realized that Johnny at that age is not "naughty" or "wilful" or "backward" in his sudden extremes of exuberance and shyness, laughing and whining, grasping and dropping, but that his musculature and nerve cell organization are in transition, his life is moving up from the simplicity of a one-way street to the higher level of choices and alternatives, and that indeed at three years he will "amaze us with his conformance, his desire to please, his interest in making not two choices, but one."

THE authors suggest that "we can afford to be philosophical because [the child] is giving us a glimpse of Nature's favorite method of growth—the method of reciprocal interweaving by means of which she brings flexors and extensors, yes and no, come and go, grasp and release, push and pull into balanced equilibrium." Indeed, children in their rapid growing can give intelligent parents a thorough course in dialectics: "The growth cycle . . . viewed in perspective . . . deviates now right, now left, now up, now down, although the general trend is toward a goal, for these deviations are constructive gropings which lay down a pathway. . . . The growing organism does not advance in an undeviating line, but oscillates along a spiral course toward maturity," passing from relative equilibrium into disequilibrium ("so often associated with 'naughty' behavior") and returning again to relative equilibrium on a higher level.

"Many of [the child's] 'strange' and passing fears, for example, are associated with a phase of innovation," i.e. disequilibrium. "The culture somewhat heedlessly (not to say ignorantly) tends to insist on a continuous state of equilibrium in the child. This leads to aggravations of all kinds, because it is contrary to an insuperable mechanism of development, whose laws are written in three part rather than one part time.

"It is helpful, therefore, to think of the growth complex in terms of opposite trends which counteract each other, but which are so skewed that they are progressively resolved in recurring phases of relative equilibrium. The developmental stream keeps flowing onward, seeks an optimal channel and finds it. A discerning culture can ease the tensions and ebullitions along the way.

"To some extent *self-activity* and *sociality* are opposing tendencies. Nature

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through maturation, and Culture through guidance bring these tendencies into balance and proportion. Excessive self-activity would make the child an isolationist. Excessive sociality would lead to extreme conformance." An intermediate state of equipoise is relative and transient but recurrent, and "Each recurrence marks a higher stage of maturity and a wider base for the expanding pyramid of personality."

It should not prove difficult for parents who have a scientific spirit to adapt the descriptions and techniques of Gesell and Ilg to the understanding of children growing in probably more war-torn surroundings than the Yale Clinic of Child Development. Particularly practical are separate discussions of the ups and downs of sleep, feeding, bowel and bladder control, personal and sex interests, and sociality. The evolution of sleep, for example, is shown to be highly complex as it plays its changing and more and more socially implicated role up through the years.

Child care workers also will be able to adapt the special chapters on Nursery School guidance. Appendices provide ample lists of play materials, books, and musical records for each pre-school age level.

THE authors conclude with a chapter welcoming the "Culture of Tomorrow" which must follow the winning of this "war of peoples." They recognize that "Freedom from want is in many ways the first of the four freedoms." For children it means food and room and "a democratically conceived system of developmental supervision." "Perhaps the most ameliorative social force that can be released in the years of reconstruction which lie ahead is an intensified conservation of the development of infants and young children." This program must be "effected by the masses" as well as the politicians and professionals. Furthermore, adult education beginning at adolescence must be a vital part of such a program. For even in "adequate" homes, ignorant parents use "harsh modes of punishment . . . grossly inconsistent with the spirit of democracy."

The most important matter of all is perhaps so apparent that the authors of this book mention it only in their preface. The child care of the "Culture of Tomorrow" is no distant "postwar" problem. The fight for adequate care has begun and must increase today.

TOBIAS SWIFT.



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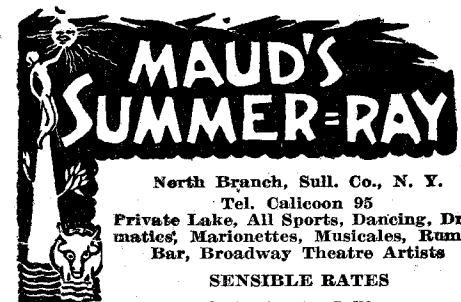
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Most of our soldiers will be experiencing their first ocean voyage and their transport ships will not always be converted luxury liners. The ships will pitch, roll, and ride the waves, causing fear, anxiety, and nausea. The book lays the basis for the removal of fear and anxiety, and the scientists assure us that the nausea will adjust itself. The various chapters in the book have been written by experts in the field and fine bibliographies have been appended to each chapter. The scientists sail into the empty sea and present simple and understandable facts about tides, waves, and currents. They sink beneath the surface of the water to emerge with the fish, the fauna, and flora of the ocean. Simple methods, drawings, and devices are made to "guesstimate" the weather and humidity. The engine room is no longer a maze of pipes, pumps, valves, and tanks, but the same diesels and turbines that the boys might have used back home.

THERE are many questions in the minds of our soldiers: Where are we going? That's a military secret. Where are we? Dead reckoning, the position and location of the stars, line of position methods will inform you if you are interested. What's it like? The chapter on ocean islands, shore lines, the formation of cliffs, the ever-changing beaches and coast lines makes fascinating reading. How soon do we get there? The origin of time, the Gregorian calendar, the time zones, the international date line help in part to explain this question.

One cannot praise too highly the inclusion of a chapter called "Myself." Infection, disease, body care, food, sex, and mental state are discussed simply and intelligently.

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Cross and the *Infantry Service Journal* under the title "What To Do Aboard a Transport." It is recommended that a copy be made available to every member of our armed forces and the men and women of our merchant marine.

JAMES KNIGHT.

## Brief Reviews

TRYOUT IN SPAIN, by Cedric Salter. Harper. \$2.50.

HIGHLY recommended as an efficient emetic. Appropriate like the white of egg in case you should happen to swallow iodine. While Salter professes sympathy for the Spanish republic, especially for the Negrin government, and appreciates that the Spanish war was a prelude to the present war, his experiences as a British correspondent on both the republican and Franco sides are basically contemptuous of the Spanish people. He is concerned primarily with the ego of Cedric Salter. Interspersed with reports of his sexual appetites and diversions are frightful tales of anarchist terror, canards against the USSR for allegedly selling oil to both Franco and the republic, plus stupid slanders against Constanca de la Mora, among others. All the more repulsive since it is written against the background of a heroic people waging a losing but immortal fight. In view of the paper shortage, it is to be hoped that publishers will dispense with books so shallow and unimportant.

GIDEON PLANISH, by Sinclair Lewis. Random House. \$2.50.

"GIDEON PLANISH" is easily Mr. Lewis' best-written novel since *Ann Vickers*. But that is like saying that Laval is easily the best ruler France has had since the Germans occupied Paris. The book has at least some of the old fire and skill of construction, and it actually has one new character (the wife) who is more than halfway believable. But it is windy, and behind the anti-fascist facade there lies the complacent contempt for the mass of a Vichy aristocrat strolling through the marketplace. And, like all of Mr. Lewis' novels after *Elmer Gantry*, it has for its main character a personality selected from one of the four good novels and tampered with a bit so that he looks for all the world like somebody entirely new.

Thus the hero, Planish, is simply Gantry with a small beard and somewhat milder manners. But he is the same pushing fake-moralist and has approximately the same aims and the same conflicts. The satire, however, is no longer sharp and unerring. It is blurred. It attacks native fascist publicity machines and lobbies, but the picture Mr. Lewis draws is obscure and often misleading.

# FILMS

## At the Canteen

Light entertainment with a serious idea . . .

"STAGE DOOR CANTEEN" is a gigantic and merry grab bag of entertainment. With dozens of stars doing brilliant bits, a regiment of comedians keeping things lively, and six orchestras treating you to swing, you feel rather as if you had been transported to a vaudevillian's heaven. Threaded on a slight but engaging love story about a soldier who meets a girl at the Canteen, there are glittering performances by everybody from Katharine Cornell down; something for everyone's taste, and this reviewer liked Cornell best. The real Stage Door Canteen is, of course, run by Broadway performers for the entertainment of visiting service men, and while you may not in three nights meet there as many celebrities as the film holds, they tell me that people quite often stumble into the kitchen and find Ethel Barrymore washing dishes. One of the finest things about the Canteen is its democracy; it draws no racist lines, and soldiers of all nations and all colors are welcome in it. And the finest thing in the film is its insistence on this fact. Valentina Orlikova and the crew of a Soviet freighter are brought in to speak for our Russian ally; Merle Oberon introduces a group of American-trained Chinese pilots, who are about to leave to fight the Japanese. A Negro soldier, winner of an award for distinguished service under fire, is singled out for commendation. All these groups and many more find in the screen Canteen, as in the real one, a place to relax joyously before and between battles. In emphasizing this, the film demonstrates that even light entertainment can convey a serious idea when it tries. And, indeed, showing us how joyously the brotherhood of man works out in such a setting is a more effective counterblast to racist riots than merely deploring them in words after the event. *Stage Door Canteen* is a worthy contribution to the war effort, and Judith Anderson, Tallulah Bankhead and the rest have not given their services in vain.

THERE never was a better potential movie than Eric Ambler's *Background to Danger*. You don't often find a spy novel with a plot both intricate and convincing; still less often one with believable characters. The Ambler books have deservedly been recognized as the best spy

novels of our generation. *Background to Danger*, as written, added to the agonizing tension of its events a vividly presented European background. And its hero was no remote incredible superman: he was likeable, confused, frightened but resolute, a normal young man bewildered at his sudden encounter with Nazi horrors. Its Soviet agent was humorous, competent, and candid; its villains were drawn from close observation of genuine fascist types. To all this Ambler added an understanding of the war for lack of which most spy-fiction is Never-Never Land nonsense.

Observe the past tense. For *Background to Danger*, as screened, would not even serve to pave the road to hell. It is astonishing that any human beings *could* be clumsy enough to make such an unholy mess out of Ambler's book—as if adapter, director, and editor had been competing for a booby prize. The novel's careful plot has given place to a mish-mash of contradictions in which men chase all over the Near East and murder each other for the possession of a fake photograph which half an hour's work in any darkroom could duplicate. The human and civilized hero has given place to one of those dead-pan thugs that George Raft has been playing so badly for years. The villains have become leering monsters. And although Ambler's honest and friendly approach to the Soviet Union has survived in one or two references to the fact that Russia is our ally, it has been destroyed elsewhere by making the Russian agents alternately sinister and comic stock types.

The film's most offensive form of silliness is its complete lack of structure. First it tosses off a few pseudo-newsreel shots to inform you that Turkey is a neutral whom Germany would like to take over. Then it suddenly plunges into an unbroken succession of lurking observers, kidnappings, beatings, murders, thrilling automobile chases on the edge of cliffs, and jumps out of high windows by Mr. Raft. All this is completely unexplained, the purpose of the film's dialogue apparently being to add to the confusion. In consequence, it becomes necessary at the end of the film for the Nazi bad man to hold hero and heroine at bay with a revolver for half an hour, during which he alternately explains all his dark machinations and announces that any minute now he is going to shoot.

Nor is there anything agreeable in seeing Peter Lorre forced to play Ambler's magnificent Zaleshoff as a dithering incompetent whom not even Rumania would have for a spy; nor in watching another Russian agent murder a girl for reasons presumed patriotic but never explained. The film's cutter, apparently despairing of making anything coherent out of this far-rago, seems to have thrown up his hands and let the sequences fall where they would; seldom have such jerky transitions come out of Hollywood. The music is bad, too.

JOY DAVIDMAN.

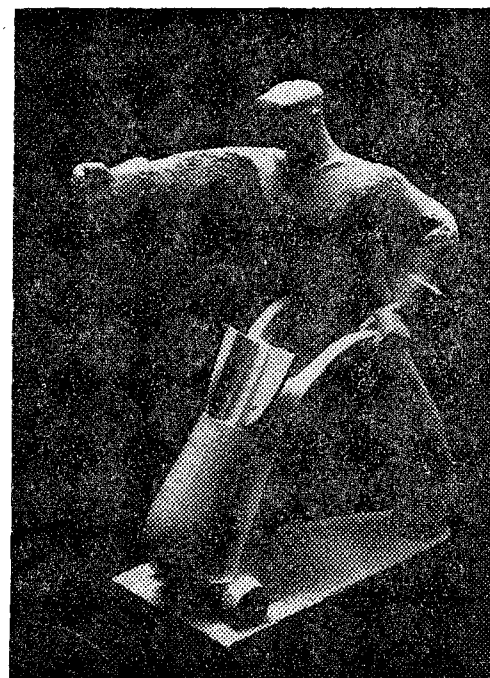
## Art Show

ONE art gallery that is making a very direct contribution to the war is that of Artists Associates, in New York City: for every painting sold the artist is paid with a War Bond. So far both the artists and the gallery are doing very well indeed under this arrangement—for it seems that people are not at all averse to killing two Nazis with one stone; i.e., by furthering representative art under a democracy, and providing funds for the materiel of battle.

Some twenty-four artists are exhibiting at the gallery, with particularly outstanding work by Albert Abramowitz, Ernest Crichlow, Zoltan Hecht, Stella Buchwald, Louis Ribak, Moses Soyer, Tamotzy, Soriano, and Shoulberg. Hecht's well constructed and painted "Brooklyn Bridge" and Shoulberg's vigorous "Still Life" are especially striking.

One very curious aspect of the show deserves comment: although most of the painters are now working in war industries, there is not, in the entire exhibit, any hint of their change in environment. Apparently their new experiences have had no effect on their art work—indeed, one feels that they paint to forget those experiences. This is a phenomenon hard to explain. In terms of history the artist's "vision and design" changed under changing conditions. Impressionism, Cubism, Post Impressionism, and so on can be explained in the light of the artist's relation to society. Is it possible that we have had too little time as yet to digest our new conditions? Is it that those conditions still seem too strange, even unfriendly to the artist? If so, we may still hope that a more vital expression will be forthcoming from the artist—that he will be moved to tell us forcefully and convincingly of his observations in a vital sector of the struggle today.

A. C.



"Labor's Answer," by Joseph Konzal. On exhibition at Artists Associates, 138 W. 15th St., New York, until July 20.

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